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## PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

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### I

#### THE PITTSBURGH DISTRICT AS A FOSTER MOTHER

SIX thousand children of wage-earners, supposedly sound in mind and limb, were cared for by the children's institutions of Allegheny County in the year 1907. Half of this number drifted in, and as many drifted out during the twelve-month, but night and day, the year round, there was a steady institutional population of 3,000 boys and girls. The majority of them were American born and Pittsburgh bred,—children whose fathers and mothers had previously been, or were in 1907, producers in this industrial district.

These 6,000 children did not include the classes made up of "special children"; that is, those who passed into the Industrial Home for Crippled Children, those who went from Allegheny County to the various state educational institutions for the blind, the deaf, or the feeble-minded; nor those committed to the Pennsylvania Reform School at Morganza. This total omitted the 320 children whom the Juvenile Court Association reported as sent from this county or from the state to correctional schools situated elsewhere because Allegheny County or Pennsylvania as a whole lacked provision for them. It did not take into account the 1,000 delinquent children constantly under the care of probation officers, and those held in the detention rooms of the juvenile court. Nor did it include the undeterminable number of destitute, under-aged girls who drifted into the numerous rescue homes which were filled most of the time by older inmates. The 3,000 children whom the day nurseries reported having cared for, the 7,626 children the Pittsburgh department of charities stated as the number included in families to which the city gave out-door relief, and the 1,643 children belonging to other families which were given aid by the county authorities were also omitted. Nor were the hundreds of other

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boys and girls who had enjoyed country outings at fresh-air homes included.

Here was a situation that challenged one's sympathies and one's wits; an educators', church-goers', and tax payers', as well as a parents' and social workers' problem; one that was not yet recognized in all its dangers and ramifications, but which involved fundamental questions of municipal responsibility for the hidden as well as exposed causes of poverty and distress. What tributaries from the Pittsburgh hills fed this living stream and toward what was it flowing?

The most natural approach to this problem was through a survey of the institutions which the community had sympathetically prepared for these children. Institution doors had been thrown open to them by the state, county, and city, and by the untiring personal efforts of the District's well-to-do for the District's struggling poor. Everywhere they found a welcome. In the very heart of Pittsburgh, a home for boys, temporarily housed in an old gray church, was making its fight against the odds of an unregenerate street. Just across the Allegheny River, in the thick of a lodging-house neighborhood, near the waterfront, was another such home. Up in the Hill District with its congestion of mixed races, was still another, and here and there, in the residence sections of the two merged cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, in their outskirts, and springing up in the open country, were other charitable asylums for children. Some were small, occupying old residences that housed from 15 to 30; others sheltered groups ranging all the way up to 1,200 in one vast plant. No fewer than 33 private institutions and three almshouses were engaged in this work in Allegheny County, the year through.\* In detail, the receipts of the institutions were as shown in the following table:

\* Four more institutions in the counties of Butler, Indiana, Washington, and Venango, were largely used by Allegheny.

The act covering county payment for destitute cases was approved April 15, 1903, as follows:

SEC. 1. BE IT ENACTED, etc., That whenever a child shall have been committed by a court or judge thereof to any industrial school, or other institution of like character, or shall become an inmate thereof, whose parents or guardian are not of sufficient ability to pay the expense of maintaining and instructing such child, such maintenance and instruction shall be paid by the county from which such child shall have been committed: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the actual cost of maintaining and instructing such child shall be paid only, and in no event shall such per capita maintenance and instruction exceed the amount of per capita cost of maintenance and instruction of inmates of the House of Refuge, etc.

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TABLE 1.—AMOUNT AND SOURCES OF INCOME OF CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, DURING ONE YEAR<sup>a</sup>

Source	FUNDS FROM EACH SPECIFIED SOURCE	
	Amount	Per Cent
Public sources		
State of Pennsylvania . . . . .	\$36,700	8.4
Allegheny County . . . . .	10,236	2.4
Total . . . . .	<b>\$46,936<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>10.8</b>
Private sources		
Endowments and investments . . . . .	\$106,480	24.4
Voluntary contributions . . . . .	145,520	33.4
Board paid for children by relatives and friends . . . . .	46,121	10.6
Other private moneys <sup>b</sup> . . . . .	90,735	20.8
Total . . . . .	<b>\$388,856</b>	<b>89.2</b>
Grand total . . . . .	<b>\$435,792</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>a</sup> No table for expenditures can be given because the institution bookkeeping defied classification, and in some instances no definite total could be secured. "We spend what we get" was the statement of one institutional treasurer.

The financial statements made by all the various institutions upon which this table was based did not cover identical calendar months,—the fiscal year of some being from January to January, of others from June to June, and so forth.

<sup>b</sup> The item entered above as "Other private moneys" is the difference between the total secured by adding the three other classifications and the total sum reported as "received from private sources." The amount, \$90,735, should, of course, have been distributed so as to come under one of the other heads, but no itemized statement of it could be secured.

Leaving out the initial cost of the plant, these institutions were maintained at an annual average per capita expense of \$145, the large amount of unpaid work done by the Roman Catholic orders making this per capita cost low for the labor actually performed. They boarded children, committed through the juvenile court, as dependents and delinquents, at a per capita rate of 37 cents a day collected from the county treasury.

In round numbers, the annual income and the cost for maintaining these institution children was well over \$435,000. This was \$125,000 more than was spent in the same year by the Pittsburgh bureau of health,\* and \$235,000 more than was spent for

\* The expenditures of the bureau of health of the city of Pittsburgh for the year ending January 1, 1908, were \$310,189, and for the Carnegie Library, for the same year, the appropriation was \$200,000—of which \$160,000 was for the maintenance of the library, which includes the entire system, central building and branches.



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the maintenance of the entire system of the Carnegie Library, central building, branches and all. Of the total about 10 per cent was derived from public funds and about 90 per cent from private sources.

### "PLACED-OUT" CHILDREN

It will simplify matters, before entering into the discussion of the institutions, to mention an alternative method of dealing with children who become dependent upon charity; namely, placing them out in foster homes where they may have the advantage of family life. Strangely enough this method, so successful in eastern Pennsylvania, and known throughout the country as the "Pennsylvania System," has been practically untried in the most populous western county.

Allegheny County made her deliberate choice of methods in 1887. The history of this decision throws some light upon the situation which we found in the District. In 1883, nearly twenty-five years before the date of our study, the so-called "Children's Law" had been passed, largely through the influence of the Children's Aid Society, newly organized under private management in Philadelphia. This law prohibited the retention in almshouses of children between the ages of two and sixteen years for periods of more than sixty days at a time, unless they belonged to the defective classes.

When the statute was passed, both the eastern and western parts of the state were liberally supplied with institutions for dependent children, and the now wellknown "Pennsylvania System" sprang into existence when the Children's Aid Society induced the county and city authorities to refer dependent children, such as had previously been sent to an almshouse, directly to the society and to pay their board in family homes chosen and supervised by the society. There was no counterpart of this placing-out work in the western part of the state, and to further such a plan there, the society, two years after the children's law went into effect, organized a branch in Pittsburgh.

For two years the Children's Aid Society supported the Pittsburgh branch from its own funds, secured entirely from private sources. In 1887, when this financial help was withdrawn, the Allegheny branch separated from the parent organization and joined with interested people in 26 other counties who then formed the Children's Aid Society of Western Pennsylvania. This new society applied for and received a state appropriation.

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How little the placing-out system had taken root in the Pittsburgh District was shown by the report of the Allegheny County branch of the Children's Aid Society of Western Pennsylvania for 1907. In that year, 62 children were received and 28 were placed in free homes. Similarly, the Children's Home Society of Pennsylvania, which entered the field nine years after the Children's Aid Society had received, in the year ending March 31, 1908, according to the statement of the superintendent, 15 Allegheny County children for placement, and had placed eight within the Allegheny County lines.

Provision for cases of cruelty and neglect was made by the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society which dated back to 1873. This society occasionally placed out children, although most of those coming under its care remained with their own families, or, if the home was broken up, were left in the custody of one or the other parent. This society reported that in 1907 it had placed 39 Allegheny County children in family homes other than those of relatives.

The Allegheny County Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had the same object as the Humane Society, but both of its charters, one giving it authority over children and the aged, the other over animals, were revoked for cause in 1907. Although the association was in operation in the early part of that year, and had at its disposal a small reception home for children, the work was so limited and disorganized that the association could not be counted as an active agency.

Another organization, the Pittsburgh Association for the Improvement of the Poor, combined institutional care, placing out, and relief in the home. To it the county and city authorities would not naturally turn for provision for "homeless" children, as it was primarily a private organization giving outdoor relief. But within the families which appealed to it for aid were children suffering from all manner of catastrophes. During 1906-07 the association placed 13 children in private families and sent 173 to institutions; 140 of these 173 were put into temporary homes which the association maintained. This means that but 33 were distributed among the other institutions and these were in most cases children who needed permanent care, or different care from that offered by the temporary home of the association.

One other agency which did some placing-out work is still to be mentioned—the juvenile court with its affiliated organizations. Its creation, under the act of 1901, was the most thought-provoking step in behalf of children ever taken in the District, and its decisions are modifying and stimulating public opinion and bringing to the front the needs of the delinquent wards of the county. Although the court was not equipped

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to place out children, yet in the absence of a working agreement with the regular child-placing agencies, it placed, in 1907, 58 children in family homes; it committed 184 to Allegheny County institutions, 90 to institutions in other Pennsylvania counties, and sent 124 to institutions outside of the state.

While the agencies enumerated above were the only ones that placed out children directly, without giving them a period of institutional life, it should be said here that more than half of the institutions in Allegheny County did such work themselves for the children they housed.

All told, the proportion of supposedly normal children handled by direct home-finding or placing-out agencies in the year studied was negligible compared with those taken into the institutions. It is to the institutions then that we must turn for an understanding of the social policies of the Pittsburgh District with respect to the vast majority of its dependent children.

TABLE 2.—CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY,  
BY RELIGIOUS CONTROL AND BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

<i>Type of Institution</i>	INSTITUTIONS				
	<i>Protes- tant</i>	<i>Catho- lic</i>	<i>He- brew</i>	<i>Non- sectar- ian</i>	<i>Total</i>
Public					
Almshouses (one county and two city).	..	..	..	3	3
Private					
Institutions for infants only . . .	1	..	..	..	1
Institutions for boys only . . .	3	1	..	..	4
Institutions for girls only . . .	2	2	..	..	4
Institutions for both boys and girls .	16	4	1	..	21
Total . . . . .	22	7	1	3	33

### SCOPE OF CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

THE ALMSHOUSE. The first type of institution to be considered is that rudimentary philanthropic agency, the almshouse, which historically has been the catch-all for all sorts of human dependency and which knows no distinctions of religion, sex or, too often, of age. Evolution was in Allegheny County, as elsewhere, bringing about the removal from almshouses of those public dependents for whom other provision was needed—the insane, the feeble-





PLAYMATES IN THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY ALMSHOUSE

Pennsylvania law permits children like these to be kept sixty days in almshouses. Some are kept longer.



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

An almshouse waif. Was there no better home for her in all western Pennsylvania?



LUNCH TIME, PITTSBURGH CITY HOME

Kind-hearted almshouse nurse, happy children, one spoon for all, and skin disease



HAPPINESS AGAINST ODDS

In the children's pavilion, Pittsburgh City Home

minded, the epileptic, and the children, and limiting it to its proper function, the care of the aged and infirm.

The Pittsburgh District boasted no fewer than three almshouses, one for the county, one for the former city of Allegheny, now merged with Pittsburgh, and one for Pittsburgh itself. At the Pittsburgh almshouse, called the City Home, a modern and attractive little pavilion had been set apart for the children's use. It was light, and had a small yard which contained swings and toys. Children were sometimes kept there illegally for many months, when, for instance, the mother was ill in the almshouse hospital. There was no concealment of this fact by the management, which would have welcomed the help of some agency in relieving it of such a burden. At the Allegheny City Home the law was strictly enforced, although one might, of course, find babies there that had been born in the institution. At the County Home in Woodville, however, conditions were startlingly bad. Here, the objectionable almshouse features which led to the framing and passage of the Children's Law in 1883 still persisted. There were no separate quarters in which the children could either sleep or play. The sanitary conditions were particularly objectionable; one room in which 10 babies and little girls and four women were crowded day and night, contained a toilet built boldly into one corner, and separated from it only by a thin wooden partition. The only provision for ventilation in this living-sleeping room, as in the other rooms where children were kept, was by windows which were rarely opened; the heating was by gas, the air was foul. Little boys over two years of age slept in the open ward occupied by disabled men—cripples, paralytics, and locomotor ataxia cases; during the day these little fellows had no place in which to play except the sitting room where the men smoked and played cards. Even the sixty days to which their stay was limited was too long a period to spend in such surroundings.\*

The visitor to this institution upon two occasions found 40

\* At the instigation of one of the directors of the poor of Allegheny County a bill was introduced in the 1913 legislature enabling poor directors to establish children's homes in connection with almshouses. This bill was defeated.

In the spring of 1914 there were 49 child inmates at Woodville. This fact was brought out in an inquiry directed at the removal of these children and the formulation of a plan which would make further commitment of children unnecessary, instituted by the Child Welfare Association and the Public Charities Association.



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children, most of them between the ages of four and sixteen, standing about in listless groups. Nowhere else in the county were there such flagrant instances of charitable and civic inertia in work for children as in this county home at Woodville, although the detention rooms for juvenile court children,\* illegally situated in the Allegheny County jail in Pittsburgh, were a close second.

**PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS.** The general scope of the private institutions may be briefly stated:

**ORPHANAGE.** But four institutions limited their work to orphans and half orphans, a point in which these institutions differed from the majority in the eastern part of the state.

**DESTITUTION.** Counting out the almshouses, none of the institutions for normal children made economic destitution a condition of entrance, and in all of them money was required for board,—if the institution knew there was any one to pay it. Some reported that they did not usually allow children to be taken out until any existing arrears were paid.

**RACE.** Several institutions admitted colored children only. One of these revealed an interesting effort made by the colored people themselves; a temporary home for children from infancy to twelve years. Another was maintained by the Women's Christian Association, and received colored children between four and twelve years of age. Third and last was the Avery Trade College. Two of the three Pittsburgh homes for boys and one of the day nurseries also received colored children. There was no race discrimination at any of the institutions for special children maintained entirely by public funds. The colored people of Pittsburgh did not seek institutional care for their children to any great extent except in cases of illness. They usually had strong home ties and were willing to adopt a lower standard of living than the white population before giving up their children.

**RELIGION.** While no institution which is declared to be sectarian is eligible for state funds, there were in the District receiving public moneys Roman Catholic institutions in which Protestant ministers never set foot, and vice versa. The term "non-sectarian" as commonly used, applied to the rules governing the admission of applicants and not to the religious management of the institution itself.

**MATERNITY.** But one institution admitted infants only. It cared for 24 at a time, kept intelligent physical records, was doing excellent nutri-

\* These rooms have since been removed, but there is still crying need for a modern detention home for delinquent children and for medical and psychological examination.



CHILDREN'S PAVILION  
The City Home, Marshalsea



AT THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOME, WOODVILLE  
With a toilet installed alongside the beds, it was used as both sleeping room and  
children's play-room



THE "PLAYGROUND"  
Allegheny County Home, Woodville



MEN'S—AND LITTLE BOYS'—WARD, WOODVILLE  
These little boys played in this men's community room, ate with them, and slept in the open ward with paralytic and otherwise disabled men



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tional work, and should, no doubt, have been expanded. A popular demand existed for more places which would receive well babies, but the meagerness of provision for such children was, on the whole, a beneficial one.

The existence of eight rescue homes for wayward and fallen girls indicated an illegitimate source of the demand for places where babies might be sent without their mothers. In the experience of workers with such girls, strong and persistent effort was required to induce them to keep their children, and young mothers needed assistance in finding work in country homes where they might support themselves as well as their babies. The need for an agency for boarding out infants was great and legitimate, but institutions which admitted babies only too often fostered the irresponsibility of unmarried mothers and should not have been multiplied. Such boarding homes were occasionally found for individuals, but the plan was not being pushed as a general program. One of these institutions did what it termed "preservation work"; that is, it received girls who were inclined to be unruly at home, but who were not considered actually delinquent. The majority of the girls were above the compulsory school age; yet frequently they could neither read nor write, and their education in the practical duties of life was extremely meager. At this juncture they presented an educational problem. Many girls were in the homes as a direct result of economic maladjustment; they were in the main girls who could not earn a fair living wage without more training than had been given them. Some were feeble-minded and should have been receiving custodial care, to continue for the remainder of their lives. Yet in only one institution was the work regarded in its broader aspects, and in that institution effort was being made to bring the law to bear on the problem. In all these homes the inmates did the ordinary housework and in addition learned to sew. The most the managements did beyond that was to help each girl secure some sort of employment, usually as a domestic servant in a private home.\*

SEX. Of the 29 institutions admitting children, 21, or three-fourths, received both boys and girls. It was characteristic of these institutions that they admitted children who were very young and kept them for a number of years. Boys were usually discharged at about the age of twelve when they were liable to become increasingly restive. The girls, however, were frequently held five or six years longer because of the assistance they were able to give in caring for the buildings and for the younger children.

\* There was a common rule among rescue homes that no girl could hope for admittance a second time. In the absence of follow-up work, it was obvious then that the institution did not know whether or not its influence had been lasting. Very little was learned of the girls after they were discharged.

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But whether for orphans or not, whether for colored or white, almost without exception the 33 institutions, with their half-million dollar budget, were filled to the extent of their capacity, and a number were spilling over. Yet 1907 was not a record breaking year in the matter of child dependence. A review of the few years which preceded it revealed the same conditions, and a careful watch throughout 1908 showed no diminution in the size of the problem. While certain local factors had stimulated the growth of children's institutions in Allegheny County, the situation there was neither exceptional nor unique. It was quite similar to that in other counties than Allegheny and in other states than Pennsylvania. Wherever charitable impulses have been allowed to run riot while the spirit of scientific inquiry has been napping, such conditions inevitably follow.

### THE SITUATION AS A WHOLE

It might seem natural to look upon each institution as an isolated household, having an independent career along its chosen path. Such an angle of vision, however, is bound to give way to the broader one which considers the problem of child care in the district as a whole and lays stress upon the common methods used, upon the typical features of institutional life, upon the relation of each institution to the others, and upon the combined service of all for the creation of a normal community.

At the time this study was made there was in the whole county no association to serve as a clearing house or common meeting ground for charities, and there was no full list of institutions in which children were received; the existing agencies knew little of one another. The few reports published were generally much out of date by the time they appeared, and contained little or nothing but a statement of financial receipts, expenditures, and alterations made to the buildings. They reflected nothing of the life which lay beneath the institutional machinery. From them it was impossible to learn at what ages these wage-earners' children had become dependent, or whether the majority of them were boys or girls. Upon one point, however, the evidence of the reports was conclusive. They presented ample proof that large numbers of sincerely interested men and women were giving time,

strength, and money to support the never ending procession of children who came under their charge. But of the forces that had wrecked the homes which should have been theirs, these reports did not drop even a hint.

**ADMISSION.** Many omissions in the reports were due to the accepted methods of procedure for admission to most of the institutions. Applications were made directly to, or were referred to, the chairman of the admission committee. Sometimes references were asked for and inquiry was made from these by letter; sometimes the whole matter was decided after interviews with relatives at the institution. Cases that were not emergent were usually held until a board meeting, and if passed upon and accepted the applicant was notified. In but one institution was there systematic effort to have the home visited by a representative of the institution in advance of the decision by the board.

**DISCHARGE.** One of three things was likely to happen when a child left one of these Pittsburgh institutions: he would be returned to parents or relatives; placed out in a home for adoption or under agreement that he should give some return in service and perhaps continue in school at the same time; or he would shift for himself and fall into unskilled work from which he could rarely advance.

The records were so defective and scattered that the number of children placed in families free, to board, or for wages by indenture could not be determined. It has been pointed out that in the absence of a strong placing-out agency in western Pennsylvania we found more than half of the Allegheny County institutions doing this work for themselves. It is a crucial point in the life of the child when he starts out, alone, to make his way among strangers. The motives of persons who apply for a child are not always in his interest and he needs the continued supervision and friendship of the institution.

The methods, in 1907, were as follows:

Only three of some 20 institutions from which children were placed out sent visitors into the home before the application for a child was approved; of these but one employed a paid agent. The usual method was to send a blank to the applicant, to correspond with the applicant's references,—preferably a minister, a physician, and a business man,—



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and then, if all seemed right, to give the child out on trial under an agreement that the institution should be notified in case there was discontent on either side. Where these methods had been used, almost no children had been returned. Pains-taking placing-out agencies elsewhere have found that many such apparently satisfactory placements mean intimidation or exploitation of the child by unscrupulous foster parents and their refusal to allow him to write freely and truthfully of his life.

One of the largest institutions for dependent children allowed them to be taken out by any woman of respectable appearance who applied at the institution, filled out a blank, and waited for the child to be dressed. It was frankly admitted by one of the managers that careful investigations should be made and that the child should be carefully followed up, but neither step was taken and the old ways continued. In the Roman Catholic institutions, following up of discharged children was usually left to the priests in the places to which the child was sent, who were to report if anything went wrong. Indentures were, fortunately, not common among these institutions, and only one institution was found that limited its placing out to the indenture system.

As a matter of fact, the majority of institutional children in the Pittsburgh District were returned to relatives or friends whenever these people wanted them. But the institutions did not definitely know what became of more than a few children; did not know whether or not they drifted into the glass-works and mines, although several of the managers stated that they suspected such exploitation. Managers might infer that a home was a dangerous one for the child because of the character of the relatives who came to see him or because some neighbor had told tales, but the family was always given the benefit of the doubt.\*

\* The president of a board of managers, in discussing the question of investigating families from which the children came and those to which they returned, said, "It is impossible for us to investigate the different cases, for the ladies of our board cannot, of course, go into neighborhoods where there is a suspicion of immorality. We have to be very careful."

The attorney of a wellknown and respected institution in Pittsburgh was asked what protection his institution gave its outgoing children and what policy he advised when parents whom the institution suspected of being unfit guardians came to take the children home again. His written answer was: "Of course, as you readily understand, the — Asylum cannot refuse to return a child to its parents on mere suspicion that the child may not be properly taken care of." It is only fair to add that this attorney believed in thorough inquiry concerning each and every child taken into the institution in the first place. He did not think, however, that thorough investigation need include visitation to the child's home

SUPERVISION. Nor was there, at the time of our study, such public supervision or visitation as would prevent the lapses of any institution in its human stewardship. The regulative powers of the state were vested in the Pennsylvania board of public charities, composed of five unpaid members appointed by the governor for periods of ten years each. A salaried agent and assistant agents were appointed by the board. The duties of the board were distinctly advisory and its reports were supposed to be the main source of information to guide the legislature in making appropriations.\*

The subsidy system of Pennsylvania, however, was notoriously lax. The ordinary procedure followed to secure an appropriation from the state was nothing short of travesty. Usually each institution made its request to the board of public charities, members of which visited the institution, inquired as to the amount of charity work done, looked over the books and went away. When the legislature convened the board submitted a list of the appropriations requested, together with its own recommendations. If an institution chose to ignore the board of public charities, it sometimes presented its own bill directly to the legislature.

In many instances the legislature decided the appropriation according to the political influence of the district in which the institution was situated or the interests which were behind it.

\* So imperfectly were the supervising powers of the board of public charities understood that the act creating it is here quoted.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE ACT CREATING A BOARD OF PUBLIC CHARITIES.

(APPROVED APRIL 24, 1869.)

Section 5. The said commissioners shall have full power either by themselves or the general agent, at all times to look into and examine the condition of all charitable, reformatory, or correctional institutions within the state, financially and otherwise, to inquire and examine into their methods of instruction, the government and management of their inmates, the official conduct of trustees, directors, and other officers and employes of the same, the condition of the buildings, grounds, and other property connected therewith, and into all other matters pertaining to their usefulness and good management; and for these purposes they shall have free access to the grounds, buildings, and all books and papers relating to said institutions; and all persons now or hereafter connected with the same are hereby directed and required to give such information and afford such facilities for inspection as the said commissioners may require; and any neglect or refusal on the part of any officer or person connected with such institution to comply with any of the requirements of this act shall subject the offender to a penalty of one hundred dollars, to be sued for and collected by the general agent, in the name of the board.

There may have been truth in the statement often made that were more responsibility placed upon the board its work would be more thorough. Associated with the board was a woman's auxiliary, not limited in number, the members of which were supposed to visit the various institutions and to report back to the boards. This auxiliary had never taken advantage of its opportunity and was practically non-existent.

Without attempting to review the difficulties confronted by the board of public charities or the character of its work, it is in point here to state that its investigations in Allegheny County were extremely superficial and that it did not require high and clearly defined standards of work in the institutions and agencies for which it recommended public money. From a supervisory point of view it was inadequately officered, having in 1907 one underpaid inspector for the 28 counties in the western part of the state. Its current reports were meager and unsatisfactory.

The other provision for a supervisory body of official stamp was so little known as to claim our special attention. A board of visitation, composed of five or more unsalaried officers, was required, under provision of the amended juvenile court law (1903), to make yearly visits to all institutions and agencies receiving children from the juvenile court, and to hand lists of such agencies as they approved to the juvenile court judges. The duties of this board were more personal in nature than those of the board of public charities. The law provided that the board of public charities should supply the board of visitation with forms upon which to report upon conditions found; and the board of visitation was to acquaint the court with the facts discovered. As neither provision was enforced, the juvenile court had received no help from either of these important bodies. No such list of investigated agencies for the use of the judges had been provided even as late as 1907, and further than this, a schedule for the reports of the board of visitation had never been drawn up and the board of public charities had therefore no records of the work of this board.

\* These bodies were supposed to be the social auditors of the state. Their reports should have shown the social value of the ex-



penditure of the large amounts of tax payers' money appropriated to the subsidized institutions. Without adequate supervision, the work of these institutions often hitched and halted, sometimes at the most crucial point. Efficient co-operation between societies, institutions, and courts was needlessly impeded. The public was not informed through these official sources either of excellent management or the reverse.

Except in rarest instances, the managers themselves confined their attention to that section of the child's life which was cut off at one end by admission and at the other end by discharge. A brief survey of the chief factors of institutional equipment and administration will describe the way they were meeting their responsibility within the bounds they had thus set. A discussion of their broader responsibilities will be considered later.

## II

### THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTION AND THE CHILD

It may be said that the old conception regarding the work of an institution was the supplying of material relief in the form of food, clothing, and shelter; food as opposed to starvation, clothing as opposed to nakedness, and shelter as opposed to exposure to the winds of heaven. These three provisions may be compared to the three R's of the old educational methods. And nothing is more evident than the fact that when managers limit their efforts to these requirements alone, they fall as far short of furnishing an adequate regimen for childhood as instruction in the three R's falls short of meeting a child's educational needs.

What is a fair and logical basis of comparison in discussing the various standards of life within children's institutions? Undoubtedly such a comparison must be with normal life. That is, the advantages of life for normal children in such institutions should be compared with the advantages of a possible home life; institutional schools with public schools; the social influences surrounding the children whose school work is done within the institution with the social influences within the private home—and so on through the whole list of factors that enter into the life of a child. Among these factors stand out with new significance

those great questions which were under pointed discussion in Pittsburgh at the time our study was made, such as housing, sanitation, physical welfare, education, and play.

**HOUSING.** Few who have not been through a large number of institutions of various kinds can realize what such matters as the width of doorways, length and breadth of play rooms, arrangement of dining rooms, division of dormitories, and sanitary provisions mean to the life carried on within the buildings. The more attention one gives to the subject the more he becomes impressed with the tyranny of institutional plan and equipment over the happiness and welfare of the institution population. A building may be satisfactorily equipped with reference to fire protection, sanitation, ventilation, and light, and yet be entirely unsuited to the needs of growing children.

The dependent children of Allegheny County were found in every conceivable variety of housing with the exception of the pure cottage system. Under the cottage system, now recommended by progressive managers everywhere, each small group of inmates forms a unit having its own kitchen, dining room, play room, and sleeping apartments.

Just when an institution which increases its capacity beyond 20 becomes congregate is difficult to say, but the congregate system has arrived at that moment when the group of children has to be managed with inadequate attention to the individual child. The question of housing, formerly a matter of shelter and bed space, has veered round until it has now become one of educational opportunities and group feeling. The cottage system means flexibility. It has come with the recognition that the congregate system is not effective in developing children for the normal duties of life that are ahead of them. Of this, these Pittsburgh institutions afforded repeated evidence.

Where large groups of children were herded together they usually marched out of the dormitories in the morning, marched back again at night, waited in long rows for the use of the lavatories, and lost individuality and tone. Where there was but one dining room for all, meal times were usually spent in silence, the children marching in to the tables and marching out again. Where corridors were narrow they shuffled along two by two in straight



CHILDHOOD EN MASSE  
Children of a great Catholic orphan asylum in Pittsburgh.





THE MARCH TO SUPPER  
Illustrative of the congregate system. 1,454 children were cared for in this institution during 1907.



WHY DO CHILDREN HAVE SPINAL CURVATURE, CROOKED SHOULDERS, AND EYESTRAIN?  
A typical institution class room, under one teacher.

lines. In the institutions where no play rooms existed or where too many children played in one room at the same hour, or in the dreary toyless places sometimes called "play rooms," the children found were listless and idle.

The housing accommodations varied from old and new residences and remodeled structures originally built for church or school purposes, to large, old or new buildings of a kind that showed how firmly the congregate system was entrenched in western Pennsylvania, even when institutions owned enough available land to permit the adoption of the cottage plan. The economy of administration possible in the old congregate plan had been taken as conclusive argument in favor of this system in Allegheny County and, as was to be expected, genuinely homelike features were hard to find.

But irrespective of the advantages, from the social and educational point of view, of one system over another, arose the question of the suitability of these Pittsburgh plants for the purposes to which they were put; that is, whether the institutions planned on congregate lines were suited to do congregate work, and whether the smaller institutions were achieving the practical cottage idea. A case in point was that of one of the oldest and richest orphanages which housed an average of 200 children. It had sold its old congregate plant in the city with the idea of using its excellent farm for a development of the cottage system. At the last minute, however, it had abandoned this plan and bought the buildings formerly occupied by a university. At the time of the study the managers had already spent more than \$125,000 upon this aggregate of corridors and class rooms, \$80,000 having been paid for the building and over \$45,000 worth of alterations having been made. The result was a plant which lacked even the points that advocates of the congregate system most approve. In another institution, housed in a cottage, such crowding existed that the worst, most repressive features of the congregate system were present, the 20 children there having practically no freedom of expression.

**SANITATION AND HYGIENE.** Sanitary conditions varied to a great extent. Many of the buildings were equipped with modern open plumbing, but in others the plumbing was old and in need of repair. In some, toilet arrangements which were sanitary from a physical point of view were not suitable from a moral one. While there are certain advantages in doing away with single bath rooms and toilet rooms, substitutes which do not take account of modesty and decency were seriously open to criticism.

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In a number of newly equipped institutions two or three children were bathed in a tub together. "Oh, yes," said one well meaning matron, "they do get ringworm and sore eyes, but I have to bathe them three at a time so that they can help each other. The institution cannot afford enough help to make any other arrangement possible."

The writer visited one institution which had a population of more than 100, of whom 40 per cent had been treated for itch the day before. The physician had been amazed to learn that these children were sleeping two and three in a bed and were bathed together in the same water.

The smaller the group of children, the more emphasis can be laid upon training in personal hygiene. In all of the institutions there was an effort to prevent interchange of the children's clothing by keeping it marked. In the matter of towels, however, efforts of this kind were not so universal nor so successful. The spread of skin and eye diseases was often directly traceable to a common towel. A little boy, whose father had been killed in a trade accident and whose mother had gone insane from grief and had later died in the almshouse, was sent to a certain institution. In the group with which he was put were a number of children who had sore eyes. All washed in the same lavatory and used the same towel. This little fellow became totally blind and was sent back to live with his poverty-stricken grandmother in one of the Pittsburgh "Runs." Fortunately through the help of outside agencies his sight was afterward partially restored.

**VENTILATION AND SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS.** The great pressure of applicants at the institutions had created a tendency to put as many children as possible into the same dormitory, with more regard for the economical use of floor space than for the amount of air given each child. Generally speaking, however, means of ventilation were adequate but were imperfectly used. From the point of physical welfare, it is immaterial whether the means of ventilation are sufficient or not if advantage is not taken of them.

The visitor saw in one asylum a dormitory which held between 115 and 150 beds, another which held 80, two which held 100 beds each, three which held 70, and others having from 30 to 40 beds in them. Such multiple dormitories are unequivocally bad, if the opinion of institutional leaders throughout this country and Europe is to be heeded.

Extreme instances existed in Pittsburgh where large numbers of children were herded in sleeping apartments so ineffectively ventilated



## PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

that had these been ten-cent lodging houses the health authorities would have closed them. Some of the children slept in rooms that were almost air-tight and perfectly dark. What air and light were received came through transoms which opened into dim halls. One dormitory had an unprotected toilet in the corner nearest the windows; yet the institution in which these conditions were found made a special point of domestic science.

It was not unusual to find the foulest air in rooms equipped with special and complex ventilating apparatus. In some of these, on bright spring days before the steam heat was turned off, the windows were kept tightly closed because to open them would upset the "system" of ventilation. On the other hand the air in some of the oldest institutions was sweet and fresh. It was not uncommon to find that dormitory windows were kept securely shut all night, that opportunities for ventilation were unheeded, and the rooms aired only during the day when the children were out of them. Expenditures of funds for slippers and wrappers, which open windows would have made necessary, were considered unjustifiable.

Beds were usually single and of iron. In but one institution were the old double-deckers in service, and an effort was being made to abolish them altogether. These double-deckers increase the sleeping capacity of a dormitory to twice the number it can otherwise hold, and seriously interfere with good ventilation; it is the type of bed which the Pittsburgh bureau of health will no longer permit even in the cheapest lodging house. Unsanitary as the double-deckers were, however, they were without doubt better than beds that held two or three children side by side. In nine institutions two children occupied the same bed, and beds in two of these held three. Years ago one of the most prosperous orphanages in the county ordered a number of extra width beds which would accommodate three children each, and some of these were still in use. Some were also found in another institution for children which had moved into a building formerly used by this orphanage. These beds, seen side by side with single, new ones, indicated one of the many ways in which institutional ideals had progressed.

**FIRE PROTECTION.** The need of apparatus for protection against fire varied according to the height and construction of a building. As a rule there was fair equipment as to fire escapes; old-fashioned buckets were being replaced by extinguishers, and occasionally tanks were found. Telephone connection was universal and a few institutions had night watches. But there was a

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grave lack of prearranged danger signals, and in those institutions which did have a gong, its power to "alarm" was impaired by its daily use in calling the children to meals. Only two reported any fire drills whatsoever.

In most instances this latter safeguard had simply been overlooked, but some institutions believed that drills were not desirable because of the danger of panic among the children although public school experience was to the contrary. But even where it might not have been wise to suggest the possibility of fire, the point of obedience to orders in case of emergency could have been gained through drills and marches. There was no excuse for the absence of fire drill among the employes, and certainly children should have been taught, as a matter of common information, what to do in case of fire. No community should wait for a repetition, within its own borders, of the terrible experiences from fire in children's institutions elsewhere. The rigid fire drills which are found in cities where such catastrophes have occurred show the tragedy of a belated attention.

CLOTHING AND FOOD. The visitor to these homes found many groups of children who, in appearance, did not differ from the average children of the public schools. With jaunty ribbons in their hair and dresses of great variety of material and cut, some of the old institutional stigma had been removed. But elsewhere the traditional institution children who, with shaven heads and blue and white uniforms, trooped two and two down long bare halls into barrack-like dining rooms, were still to be seen.

The question of food was one which needed a great deal more attention than had yet been given to it. There are always certain children who do not thrive on an ordinary diet, and it is in large institutions where there are the greatest number of these children that such matters usually pass unnoticed. The fact that a change in dietary is almost certain to increase the food item in the budget is largely responsible in asylums for lack of variety both in the materials chosen and in their preparation, while the failure to weigh and measure the children and to keep health records often conceals the evils of an unbalanced diet. In many of the children's institutions in the Pittsburgh District the food was nutritious and varied, but this was so far from true of all that the

bills of fare of some could mean nothing but semi-starvation for growing bones and tissues.

A dietary used alike by five institutions housing many children from four to fourteen years of age is here given to show how restricted some of the menus had become:

Breakfast: Coffee, bread and a little butter.

Dinner: Stew, bread, water.

Supper: Tea, bread with spoonful of molasses on it.

(Infirm children were given milk.)

At each of the institutions regret was expressed that a more varied diet could not be afforded. But what are we to say of our vaunted progress when the children for whom we have assumed parental responsibility can not have milk and other proper foods because such foods cost money?

The meals supplied to dependent and delinquent children held by the juvenile court in the detention rooms of the county jail were regular jail rations; allowance for breakfast, one quart of clear coffee apiece, without milk, and half a loaf of white bread. The dinner was soup or stew, with bread and water. Supper consisted of bread and molasses. Children fed on this sort of diet were frequently fat, but undertoned and anemic.

The responsibility for balanced diets properly belonged to the medical adviser of the institutions, since trained dietitians were not employed. The physician in one institution for girls spoke of their unaccountable nervousness, and when asked what their diet was, said he had never inquired. He was startled to learn from the superintendent that most of them drank six large bowls of coffee a day.

In large institutions the tableware was often enamel, chipped into an unsanitary state, and the tables usually had no cloths. But in most of the institutions a higher standard had been reached, and table cloths were used as well as napkins. Sometimes enamel ware was given to the smaller children while the older ones had stoneware or china, and the table utensils were such as are found in the average home. This was a marked step in advance.

**PHYSICAL WELFARE.** Provisions for sleep, food, and shelter are inevitably bound up with the whole question of a child's development. Study of his physical condition should begin at the time of his first contact with any charitable agency. We have



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seen a yearly intake of some 3,000 minors of whose antecedents the institutions had little knowledge. Of their physical and mental make-up still less was known at the time of admission.

To be sure, it was a general rule that the child for whom application was made should be free from disease. Most of the institutions required a statement to that effect from either their own or another physician. The physicians appointed by the institution managers usually examined the child's scalp, looked at his throat, and inspected his chest for eruption. If the child had conspicuous trouble of any sort the fact was usually noted, but of such defects as those of the teeth, spine, ears, or eyes, there was general disregard. In the early days of institutions, examining physicians were connected with the staff in order to guard against epidemics of disease. Pittsburgh institutions still laid emphasis chiefly upon contagion, in spite of recent revelations as to the prevalence of abnormal conditions in children who easily pass a superficial examination but who have defects which, if neglected, mean lifelong handicaps.

In many institutions, after the physician had granted the health certificate, the case was acted upon by a committee of persons who usually had not seen the child. They depended upon the physician for knowledge of the child's physical condition; he depended upon the managers for the detailed work; all depended upon the superintendent or matron for notification of impending trouble, and superintendent or matron depended upon the managers and physicians for direction. These superintendents or matrons were not required to know how to read the meaning of such signals as enlarged glands, adenoids, slight chorea, orthopedic deformities, and the stigmata of defective mentality. As a result, the child remained a practically unknown bundle of tendencies.

Although workers in the institutions that cared for children between the ages of two and twelve constantly spoke of the low mortality rates and the small amount of acute illness, such facts meant but little, inasmuch as the death rate for children between these ages is normally far lower than the death rate for children from one to two years of age, or during the first twelve months of life. Moreover, mortality statistics did not directly reveal the physical devastations which were due to wrong feeding. Failure

to keep children up to physical tone impaired their normal ability to resist disease. The death certificates told only the immediate illness and said nothing of the lowered vitality which was oftentimes responsible.

With the desire to present as graphically as possible the urgent need for the protection of the health of institution children, the following quotations are selected as typical of the answers we received to inquiries on the subject:

"Death records reported lost." (Information given by physician.)

"No records kept. Some typhoid." (Information given by physician.)

"I don't remember. There were 16 or 18 deaths—perhaps more. Most of them were due to tubercular and syphilitic conditions." (Information given by physician.)

The superintendent of a very large institution for children reported the number who died in one year as "Some," and in the next year as "Several."

In one institution physical examinations were made of the girls who entered and their ailments were recorded under 51 heads, such as "heart, heartburn, headache, neuralgia, vertigo, nervousness, acne, hysteria," and so forth.

The chief executive of one large institution said: "I didn't keep a list; had it all in my head. But there is a hospital record that tells a good deal. It does not record the little diseases like glands and things like that—just the important ones like typhoid. But I can't find it. I guess the ladies tore it up on board day."

An employe of another large asylum, in submitting her records, wrote with spirit: "Of course there were many other children treated, but owing to the frequent change of matrons, or to the carelessness of some, there were no records kept part of the time. We will hope for better management in the future." Halfway through the long list which was arranged in a form that showed age, nationality, and sex of each patient, were entered, under "Diagnosis," the following: "Sore throat, sore ear, sore nose, hat pin stuck in eye, sore chin, eczema"; then this employe interpolated the following note: "Of these cases there is no record as to improvement or time of dismissal. I came to the Home on the first of August, 1907, and have tried to keep a complete record since, but can find no record for February and part of March, although I know there were quite a number of cases of diphtheria and measles during that time."

In the face of such lack of health work it is pertinent to cite the case of a little girl who had been for four years in the entire charge of an institution and was taken thence to a hospital in an advanced stage of tuberculosis. What excuse was there for the fact that mouth breathers and conspicuous cases of eyestrain had been neglected, and that many institutions were obliged because of preventable disease within their walls to close their doors to applicants during long weeks of quarantine, at the time of the year when the community needed them most? Why should a little girl have been allowed to live for years in an institution with the lower half of her arm, broken in early childhood, set the wrong way around by the institution physician? The list of such actual instances is too long to be given here.

Serious though the health losses were, there were still other losses involved in such situations. There was family disintegration resulting from extended quarantines during which parents were not allowed to see their children, and as a result, lost their sense of responsibility for them. There were educational losses when an epidemic broke out in an institution which sent its children to public school, since all the inmates were excluded from attending because the management failed to provide isolation for newcomers. One institution was found in which incoming children were quarantined for two weeks before joining the others. This rule should have been a general one.

Childhood is the time for storing energy, for getting a start, and the first test of the success of an institution in caring for children over two years of age lies in the children's rate of increase in height, weight, and endurance. Careful inquiry did not reveal record of weight, height, or general development in any of the institutions which we are discussing; nor had even casual health or mortality records been preserved. Only the state schools and a few private institutions appeared to have paid any attention to these points.

RECREATION. Outside of institution walls it is recognized that "mental training" must be linked with healthy recreational life. A small amount of apparatus, such as clubs, wands, and dumb-bells, was found in some of the institutions. In one, boys were given two half-hour lessons, and girls one half-hour lesson a week. In one





DORMITORY, AVERY TRADE SCHOOL  
What standards of sanitation could this dormitory teach?



GIRLS' DORMITORY, MORGANZA (1908)  
Note open toilets at far end of room, also the lack of light and air. Since abandoned



THE RUNNING TRACK  
Pennsylvania Reform School, Morganza.



UNDER THE TREES AT MORGANZA

so-called gymnasium there was no instruction whatever and the boys merely "rough-housed" there. An excellent gymnasium was to be found in the school for the blind, and the reform school at Morganza had one in process of erection; but in the institutions for normal children in Allegheny County there was no real physical training in or out of gymnasiums.

There is an honest difference of opinion as to the advisability of gymnasiums in institutions for little children. But it is difficult to find anyone who does not take for granted provision for some play space both indoors and out. Various responses had been made to this need.

Some institutions had no outdoor space beyond small yards where the inviting earth was battened down under firm concrete. Eleven institutions had no space set aside for play. In many others the day's program was so arranged that great masses of children crowded into the play room at the same time. Repeatedly was the statement made by the institution workers that it was quite impossible to have playthings or to organize helpful games among so many children congested into small space.

In contrast one institution had some interesting arrangements. Indoors there was a huge play room with blackboards all around the walls on which the children delighted to scribble. The room contained swings and toys. Outside there was a large pavilion, more swings, and the visitor saw traces of various childish attempts at carpentry and railway construction that had been encouraged. The children went to a nearby public playground and came back to introduce into their own domain the games and ideas they had learned there. The institution had not as much outdoor space for play as had many of the others, but it possessed that elusive thing, the play spirit.

In *opportunities* for outdoor recreation many of the institutions were exceedingly well off, having grounds that spread out temptingly, with suggestions of play house sites and nice corners in which to dig, as well as space for team play. These attractions, however, demanded leadership and direction before they could yield the fullest advantage. More than children in free, community life do children in institutions lack initiative. They need direction. Failure to supply it is educationally wasteful. Anyone who had stood by the writer one spring day, and watched the children of a certain Pittsburgh orphan asylum at play time, would have noticed that Mary never caught anybody at tag, so that after a few failures she stopped playing and leaned up against the



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building to sulk; that John, always the center of a commotion in the corner of the yard was a bully, and that all the little fellows began to cry when he came around. No children in all this large group needed the deep lessons of play more than did Mary and John, and the weaklings who were afraid of John. Had there been a play director to teach the Marys the true spirit of sportsmanship—which they were going to need all their lives; to teach the Johns to respect the rights of others, and the weaklings to respect their own, there would have been different spectacles at play times as well as happier, less passive, or nervous sets of children to deal with outside of play hours in the Pittsburgh institutions for children.\*

**MORAL EDUCATION.** In moral training, as in physical care, we found constant traces of the great and desensitizing influence of the congregate system. It is true that the attitude of those in charge when helpfully and skilfully expressed did sometimes bring good tone and spirit even into congregate grouping, as an unsympathetic and depressing attitude may make child life miserable in the most approved cottage grouping. But in the institutions of the Pittsburgh District the brick and mortar of the congregate building usually succeeded in dominating the spirit of the household.

Closely linked with the need for physical training and moral instruction for both boys and girls was the need for instruction in sex hygiene and for stimulating moral leadership. This sort of education and example are essential to the future safety of these institutional wards, yet, in sharp contrast to the elaborate provisions for theological teaching, was the absence even in the "preservation class" for unruly girls, in the homes for wage-earning boys, and in the reform school and rescue homes, of instruction in the care and protection of their bodies.

Moral education in institutions for children, taken in a formal sense, depends upon the rules of the management. Attendance at church, Sunday school, or other religious services was everywhere required. In Catholic institutions there were daily services in the institution chapels; in the Jewish orphanage, Hebrew was taught on week days and the

\* The reform school at Morganza was the first institution to form working relations with the Pittsburgh Playground Association. Since 1907, however, one private orphanage has added a resident play director to its staff and others are beginning to think favorably of trained recreation officers.

synagogue was attended on the Sabbath; in other institutions the children usually went outside to church.

But discipline, which may be considered as moral education applied, was, with the exception of the rules which were made by the managing board, in the hands of those in immediate charge of the children. The usual punishment was deprivation of rights or privileges; for example, the revoking of the privilege of talking during meals, or the granting of it only on good behavior. In 15 of the institutions, five of which were Roman Catholic, where no conversation was allowed at meals, unless perhaps on feast days, other deprivations were more common.

Corporal punishment was most commonly found in institutions where equipment was meager, where there was little play, where few children, if any, had individual possessions, and where the number of privileges was small. Discipline was said to be more difficult in small and informal institutions, while the testimony of those in charge of large congregate plants was that the children are easily managed without much special effort. This is significant. It is the difference between the expression and the repression of natural childish impulses.

**EDUCATION.** Twelve institutions educated their children entirely within the institution walls, 13 in public schools, one in a parochial school; five sent their older children to the public schools and had classes at home for the others. Academic work was not applicable to five; while the almshouse provided no schooling at all. In size of classes, courses, and equipment, the institutional school rooms were abnormal.

Few of the institutions which conducted their own schools were large enough to instruct the different grades separately, and the usual method was to place the children under one teacher, reverting to old district school standards. Neither did these institutions always adhere to the public school classification, although it was invariably the standard of comparison. For example, 60 little girls were found trying to gain an education without either histories or geographies.

The average number of children to each teacher in the institution schools was 10 to 20 in four institutions; 20 to 30 in one; 30 to 40 in two; 40 to 50 in one; 60 to 70 in one; 70 to 115 in one; and from 80 to 90 in one. The class in which 115 children were enrolled under one teacher was doing elementary work. One of the huge classes was being taught by a girl of fifteen years who had been raised in the institution. She taught during the regular public school hours, worked in the dining room before and after

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school sessions, and although she received no remuneration, seemed to be proud and happy in her work. Many of the teachers in the institution schools were of high grade, both in training and personality, but this could not be claimed for all.

The president of one board said that it was easy to find teachers for her institution; but that she had to select someone for the kindergarten who knew how to play games, though even this was not necessary for the primary children. She said she had "a nice girl" in charge of the primary department who had almost finished the grammar grades in Pittsburgh schools, and the teacher of the intermediate department had been, she thought, through the first year of the high school.

There were but two real kindergartens among these institution schools and the teacher in one of these was supplied by the Pittsburgh Kindergarten Association. Many so-called kindergarten classes were in charge of caretakers, but these did not have the value of standardized kindergarten work. The lack of regular kindergartens was largely due to prejudice against them. Their cost was not regarded as justified by the "results." Yet no tests to determine "results" were to be found in the institution records.

Even when institutions possess the wherewithal to provide the best school equipment, there are well recognized advantages to be had in utilizing the public schools. Here children come into contact with others of their own ages and acquire an amount of general information which they can not find in classes made up exclusively of children whose experiences are no broader than their own. In the Pittsburgh District, however, one incidental result of having children taught in the regular public schools called for remedy. In institutions where schools had been abolished the teachers were no longer found in residence, and the evening and holiday activities devolved upon the overburdened matron, caretakers, and seamstresses. Yet these after school hours, in which the boys and girls were left to their own resources, were the very ones which in normal homes offer to parents the most valuable opportunities for directing children in the best use of their own powers and faculties.

Underlying the whole unsatisfactory educational situation in the institutions for children lay the truth of the observation made by several teachers in orphan asylums; namely, that the most advanced pupils were soon taken or placed out and that the residue was a slow, backward class almost uniformly low in tone.

The consciousness that a child might be taken out of a



class at any time was said to interfere somewhat with the attitude of both teacher and pupil in the institution schools. The continual arrival of new children and departure of old ones was prejudicial to the work and made it difficult to hold the children's attention. There was a need then for special ability and high qualifications in the teaching staff that handled these charges. Students of child development in Pittsburgh were urging the training of hand and foot, mentality tests, and industrial education for the best development of the children of the community, but these needs were all but unrecognized in the institutions.

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING.** There is another phase of educational work which puts a special obligation upon institutions for dependent children; namely, vocational guidance and industrial training. Earlier even than the children who live at home are these boys and girls likely to be thrown in whole or in part upon their own resources.

Some of the fundamental principles for industrial work for children are that it shall be physically developmental, varied, full of suggestion, and not too technical in character. In the industrial work of the more progressive public schools there were for girls, classes in domestic science, including cooking, under the supervision of a teacher trained in food values; instruction in the selection of raw foodstuffs; sewing under a teacher who sought not only to make the training of permanent value, but to make needlework attractive as well as practically useful; and for boys, training in the use of tools and the guiding of their handiwork through the various manipulations to the finished product.

Such definition of industrial work was not that of the Pittsburgh institutions which are under discussion. They described as "industrial training" the help given by the children in the scrubbing and cleaning of the building, the oiling of miles of hallways, the routine preparation of food in the kitchen, the serving of meals, as well as the making and mending of clothes for institution use.

Coupled with the desire to teach the practical things which must be done in the ordinary home was the necessity for renewing the institutional

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supply of clothing, table and bed linen at the least possible expense. There was also too little rotation of tasks, and the child who answered the door nicely or who had a special dexterity in the dining room or mending room was liable to be kept indefinitely at one branch of work. So-called "industrial" work sometimes interfered with regular school work and came dangerously near being child labor. It was stated by those in charge of one institution that children over eight years old went to school from 8 until 10 in the morning, then did routine work in the sewing room, kitchen, or other parts of the building until 4:30 or 5 p. m. From 5 to 5:30 p. m. they were free to play outdoors; then they had supper with its attendant work, a little more time for recreation, and they went to school again from 7:15 or 7:30 until 8:30 or later in the evening.

Such industrial work was not individual nor was it presented as an educational accomplishment on a par with arithmetic and spelling; but as a duty to be performed obediently because it was a necessary task. Experience in cooking rarely covered more than the limited institution dietary. In the congregate institutions, where food was prepared in large quantities and where laundry work was done by machinery, the children did not gain much experience in ordinary housework.

Delinquents especially need skilled teachers. With most of these children the ordinary school has failed and they have only the most imperfect kind of education. It would be well if trade standards could be given to the manual work of unruly boys and girls, but so long a period is needed for the undoing of bad ways and the drilling in of good new ones, that the educational task of a reform school is unusually difficult. The raw material contained in the Pennsylvania Reform School at Morganza needed the best that educators could give. Special branches taught the boys included mechanical and architectural drawing, bricklaying, carpentry, wood-turning, smithing, painting, plumbing, gasfitting, tailoring, printing, stenography, typewriting, telegraphy, and baking. The girls' department was rather undeveloped. It offered sewing, some domestic science, and laundry work. Its activities had been grouped around the needs of the institution rather than around the needs of the girls themselves, and the boys' department was parasitical upon that of the girls in the amount of laundry work it required.\*

The only institutions which in 1907 made a point of special industrial features for normal children were the Boys' Industrial Home at Oakdale, where some manual training as well as practical farm work was

\* A complete report was made by the Pittsburgh Survey to the trustees of this school in March, 1908. This institution has shown a progressive spirit in adopting a physical record blank, starting a gymnasium and family dwellings of newest type, as well as developing clubs and recreation activities.

given; the Newsboys' Home, which offered some printing and carpentry; St. Joseph's Protectory and Industrial School for Boys, which contained a printing shop and bakery; the Avery Trade College, which offered courses to colored girls in domestic science, millinery, dressmaking, and nursing, and also classes to boys in catering and tailoring.\*

There was in 1907 no institution in the county where normal white dependent girls could be maintained and given vocational training. The District sadly lacked educational provision for them.

How many children brought up in institutions actually secured education or trade training after discharge it was impossible to learn. The chances were slim that a child would have further schooling after leaving the institution; it was probable that what he received while there would decide much of his future growth, and that what he missed would create lasting future limitation.

One danger to a child who was discharged to a parent or to other relatives who had paid but scant attention to him while he had been in the institution, was that he would be exploited by a false affidavit on a work certificate. This evil was rampant in Pennsylvania. In obtaining a work certificate no signature from school authorities was required, no documentary evidence of age. Children of twelve years were easily passed off as fourteen on age certificates of brothers or sisters or on false ones of their own. Instances of this sort were found in the course of the survey.

Children who had grown up in one of the institutions which did not keep them beyond their twelfth year and who had no home to return to, faced a perilous fork of the roads. Our records showed

\* This last institution was not on a satisfactory basis and reached few who needed such advantages as it was intended to supply.

In contrast, well planned industrial training for special children had been started in the Industrial Home for Crippled Children and in the state schools for the blind and deaf. The crippled children were too young to have more than simple branches, but the school for the deaf offered housekeeping, paper hanging, upholstering, shoemaking, printing, carpentry, dressmaking and cooking. An interesting experiment in domestic science was provided in a completely furnished house for girls—an opportunity intended to give them what shop work furnished the boys. In detachments of about eight, the girls were taught home-making on the same scale to which they would probably have to gauge their efforts later on. The Western Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind stands in the front ranks of schools offering such training. Its industrial features in 1907 were chair-caning, broom-making, printing, a business course with practical lessons in salesmanship, piano tuning, typewriting, and sloyd for boys; instrumental and vocal music were offered both sexes, and for the girls there were sewing, music, and massage.



that unless these children were placed out in the first few years of life they were not in demand again until old enough to be of use. In the case of normal boys unclaimed by relatives, an effort was made to place them out as early as possible. In this way the institutions escaped their problems of education and vocational training. But the majority remained in the institutions until fourteen or over and it was of vital importance that before their discharge they should have had their ambitions stirred in the right direction and have had as much experience as possible along developmental lines.

The girls, moreover, were commonly kept in the institutions until the maximum age was reached as prescribed under the institution rules. In a number of the institutions effort was made to keep them until they were eighteen. As has been seen, the discharged boys were as a rule exposed to the community forces earlier than the girls. They usually went from the institution to the job, but if under fourteen they drifted for two dangerous years—often into child labor.

There was a popular conception among the philanthropic boards that all dependent boys ought to do farm work and that all girls should jump at the chance of being "trained for domestic service." This is a sadly mistaken and obstinate idea. While some children are found who are vocationally fitted for farm or housework, as a rule the brightest girls and boys look forward to some sort of a business career. It is dangerous to force boys to work on farms or girls to become servants against their persistent objection; their training should be directed with its future use in mind and should be a vocational asset if possible. There was a general failure in the institutions to recognize the fact that women had entered industry to stay, and that girls of certain types and ages would profit by lessons in salesmanship and trade teaching of a practical sort, in addition to experience in housework.

A mother said that her daughter had been greatly spoiled by her years in a certain children's institution. She had been allowed to devote most of her time to fancy embroidery under the impression that she was learning a trade. After being discharged she found that no one could make a living at that kind of work and she did not like domestic service, which was the only other alterna-



The only sort of "industrial training" given boys in one congregate plant.

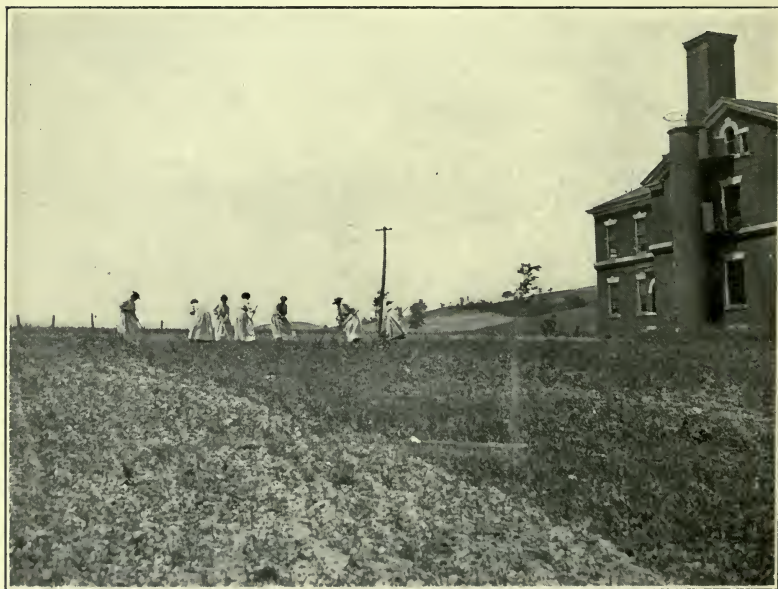


Shop work for boys. Pennsylvania Reform School, Morganza.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FOR BOYS



The laundry of a congregate plant.



A new departure for the girls. Pennsylvania Reform School, Morganza.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FOR GIRLS



tive that seemed open to her. We came across another mother, bright and overworked, who had herself lived in an institution from the time she was eight until she was seventeen. She was sorry she had not been given the chance to learn a "real trade" or get a start in some profession before she left the asylum. She complained that the only things the girls had been taught besides ordinary lessons were mending, darning, and general housework; that it was hard to go out washing every day in the week for a bare living, and that if she had had more opportunity herself while at the institution, her two little sons would not have had to be put back upon the charity of the very asylum in which she herself had been brought up.

These considerations make very clear that the work carried on within institutional walls can not be successful as a thing apart, detached from the practical demands of life outside them. The future wellbeing of the children cared for is the social test of such provision (physical care, education, character building and equipment for life) as institutions make for their child tenants. They are under obligation to safeguard the futures of their children after discharge and to learn from the experiences of the youth they have already sent out into the competitive world how to guide those still under their protection.

### RECAPITULATION

We have reached a point then where we can recapitulate the services accorded their charges by this group of institutions in comparison with the services accorded non-institutional children by the community. Life in the cottage type of institution approaches the intimate care which the family life affords; life in the barracks type obviously falls below it. Yet as we have seen, the latter predominated in the Pittsburgh District. Unquestionably, children were sheltered and nurtured by these philanthropies on a far higher scale of care than was the case in many of the homes from which they came. One of the most common and specious arguments which can possibly be put forth is that the child is better provided for in the institution, even without special care, than he would be in his own home. This argument limits the work of institutions which have undertaken the protection of children to the most primitive meaning of the three

R's of hospitality, and throws back upon many poor and ignorant families from which the children come, the curse of their low standards. Where should we demand that health measures be more progressive than in institutions for those children who have suffered the denial of a strong foundation for health? We do not judge the sanitary equipment of a hospital by comparing it with the attic from which a fever-stricken patient has been taken.

There was urgent need, then, in Allegheny County for adequate public supervision which should set institutional standards of building construction, sanitation, medical supervision, and education; which through its investigations would rout out old evils and afford an adequate basis of fact for the giver and legislator. The situation was too large and too serious to be considered merely from the doorsteps of one particular agency. The results of adequate supervisory work would bring encouragement, sane criticism, and support to the many earnest people contributing.

The recipe for healthy childhood has been written large of late, and scattered broadcast. As with other recipes, it has been used with variation of method and of minor ingredients. But proper food, enough sleep, good environment, a suitable division of work and play, with fresh air and happiness, have proven so all-important that, taking these things together, there has been established a more or less definite standard to apply to any person, place, or circumstance which controls a child.

As the result of a general movement which owes much of its strength to those sad cases of physical misfortune arising from civic as well as parental neglect,—cases of children who have not had proper food, enough sleep, right surroundings, and suitable activities,—children everywhere have become increasingly conspicuous objects of study in the schools, in their homes, at play, and at work. In Pittsburgh at the time of this investigation, many changes were taking place. Medical inspection in schools and home nursing were being discussed and adopted. The housing problem with stress laid upon the need of proper sanitary conditions and the evils of overcrowding, was being agitated. Manual training, domestic science, vocational guidance, and trade teaching were being developed; settlement activities, legislation against

child labor, improved methods in the giving of relief, were being pushed to the front. All these were affecting the life of the child in the outside community to a degree which our analysis of conditions shows was not true of life within the average institution.

Physicians have been maintaining that, were they allowed to direct the life of a child without interference, they could produce astonishing results. Teachers have asserted that they could accomplish twice as much for each pupil if they could control the hours spent outside of the school room as well as those spent within. Economists and experts in all fields of children's work have deplored the lack of co-ordination in the life of the child and have recommended laboratory methods of research in the complex problems of health and education. While it had been within the power of the children's institutions, in the Pittsburgh District as well as elsewhere, to work for the child with all these factors within their control, we found that, with a few notable exceptions, the children's institutions here as elsewhere had remained on the remote edges of great forward movements of the day.

### III

#### THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTION AND THE FAMILY

Visiting day in a children's institution of the Pittsburgh District vividly reveals many social and educational responsibilities and brings to the managers a thousand clues leading down into well-to-do districts of the town, into its small-shop quarters, into its fashionable East End, and into its low-rent neighborhoods,—in fact, into all the snares of the city's interwoven life. This is the day when parents and friends are allowed to come and to bring the children gifts.

Many types of the native born are to be seen on these visiting days. There are hardworking men from the mill and factory; there are, as well, flashily dressed women and well dressed men whose prosperous appearance leads one to inquire what reason they can have for placing their children in an institution. That young woman there, for instance, dressed in the height of fashion with the little boy on her knee, says that his father is dead and that she has married again but, although her new husband earns \$200 a month he will not support the boy. She occasionally pays a



dollar out of her pin money and expects to take the child home soon; meanwhile state and private charity unquestioningly support him. The respectable looking woman next her, dressed in black, feeding fruit to her group of five boys and girls, lost her husband by typhoid fever three weeks ago. She is working out now and can not afford a home for the children. It is impossible for her to pay board at the institution and to save for a home too; still she would rather pay her margin of income for board than have the children fed by charity. Next sit two children whose parents are in jail for drunkenness; their aunt, a mill hand, supports them in the institution although she has to go out without a winter coat to do it. Next is a family group, comfortably clothed, calling upon the oldest daughter, who is boarded in the institution at a nominal charge because of its "educational advantages."

Which of the children had been placed in the institution because of economic disaster too powerful for the household to sustain, and which as the results of situations that could have been controlled and straightened out through wisely directed human effort? The task of discriminating between the children who should be admitted to institutional life and those who should not is one calling for great nicety of insight and knowledge. A clear distinction must be made between the apparent causes and the underlying causes of distress.

The weighing of these causes is a responsibility which the institution owes even before it gives such simple services as food and shelter for other than emergency cases needing temporary care. The first step is to determine whether the possibility of life in his own home still exists for a child; the second is, if he does require charitable provision, to ascertain whether or not institutional care is what he needs most. It is not sufficient to learn that the father is out of work or that the mother is in the hospital. Modern philanthropy has demonstrated that the unemployment of a father and the illness of a mother are mere starting points for the determination of the real cause of trouble. Is the unemployment necessary, and why? Can work be found for the father and health be found for the mother? These questions must be settled before a child can be justly pronounced to be in need of new guardianship or of institutional care.

## PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

At the time of our inquiry, reliance was placed by children's institutions of Pittsburgh upon the brief and defective records already referred to, supplemented sometimes by the casual memory of employes. The matron of one institution by talking with the people who came to see the children had gained more or less information about the beneficiaries. According to her running comment, while going over the books with us, there were in the institution early in 1908, 105 boys and 91 girls, a total of 196 children. She thought that, of these, 191 were American, four German, and one Polish. The total number of families represented was 102. She said that both father and mother were dead in one family, in eight nothing was known of the parents, in 23 desertion caused the dependency of the children, in five sickness, in two insanity, and in one it was due to the feeble-mindedness of a parent. Of the other 62 families the institution knew nothing sufficiently definite to explain the cause of the application; out of the 102 families represented, therefore, there was definite information regarding only 40 (or 39 per cent). Yet to these unknown families it had contributed many thousands of dollars in what may be called indoor relief for their children.

Many of the managers had come to feel that there was some mysterious justification for grouping the children together upon the basis of family misfortune—a point of view which was reflected by a little institution boy in Pittsburgh.

"Who are you?" he asked a newly arrived little institution girl.

"I'm an orphan," replied the little girl.

"So am I," said the little boy, "let's play together."

Other managers, however, were seriously beginning to question the results which were secured by the usual institutional methods.

A social worker, just after a hard winter's study of children's institutions, stood one day beside a woman who had been the balance-wheel of a children's institution in Pittsburgh for many years. They were watching 200 boys and girls playing in the institution yard.

"What brought all these children here?" asked the social worker.

"Well," said the manager, "most of them came because they

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were whole orphans or half orphans. But some of them have both fathers and mothers living, who, for one reason or another, can't provide for them, and really such children need us as much as though they had no parents at all."

"Yes," said the social worker, "but before you took them what was the matter with the parents? Why were the children orphans, or, if both parents were living, why did their children come to an institution? Does anybody know?"

"Oh," said the manager easily, "in a way we all know why. They are here because their parents were ill or dead or out of work; most of the fathers drank and deserted, or the mothers neglected the children and let them run wild. Some of the mothers are good, self-respecting women, but they have to work all day and can't keep up a home. The burden of these children rests heavily upon every admission committee. Worst of all, the number of applications for our care increases all the time. We refuse them nearly every day."

The social worker thought this over for a moment, and said, "Couldn't we do something to stem the tide if we knew why the fathers and mothers were ill, or dead, or out of work; why so many of them drank and deserted; why the good parents should have given up their children just because of poverty?"

"I have often wished," said the manager slowly, "that someone would help us to get as far back as that."

## THE FAMILY BACKGROUND

As a small beginning toward getting "as far back as that," the quick survey of the children's institutions of Allegheny County, described in a previous chapter, was followed by a limited case study of some of the institution children and their families. In this undertaking five typical institutions for supposedly normal children co-operated by giving us access to the records concerning their wards and by allowing us to call upon the relatives and friends of the children whenever they could be found. The five visitors on our staff were recognized, for the time being, as temporary workers for these institutions. One was a Roman Catholic asylum with a population of 300, admitting girls and boys from infancy up to the age of ten or twelve, and keeping the girls,



if necessary, until they were eighteen. The four other asylums were Protestant, undenominational. Two, each with a capacity and usual population of about 200, received boys and girls from infancy up to twelve or thereabouts, discharging or placing out the boys at the age of twelve or fourteen but keeping the girls longer if it seemed best to do so. One of the institutions was exclusively for boys from eight to sixteen years of age and the other received girls from four years up.\*

As we have already seen, the machinery in Pittsburgh for handling applications for institutional care was the same as in the days when the city was a comparatively simple community and when managers were able to keep fairly well informed of conditions among their clientele.

In three of the five institutions co-operating in this special study, applications for admission were made to the chairman of an admission committee and in the others to the superintendent. If these persons felt that conference with the applicant was insufficient, they communicated with the references by telephone or correspondence. Occasionally information was asked from sources other than the references given. The Roman Catholic asylum took pains to secure letters from parish priests as to the standing of the applicants and their claims upon charity, but oftentimes applicants were not known to the priests and the asylum did not get the desired information. The superintendent of this asylum had a keen appreciation of the need for information and was trying to devise some way of establishing an adequate system of inquiry upon an inadequate income.

One of the institutions employed a paid secretary who usually visited the homes of the children at the time of application and discharge. The object of her inquiry was more to make certain that the family needed help and to inform the institution

\* The data presented in this chapter do not, however, refer only to these five originally co-operating institutions. Many of the families they had touched had been dealt with by a number of different agencies, and so many of the children had been transferred from one to another of these that before our study was concluded we had been brought into contact with the work of every child-caring institution of the District. Except in a few special instances which thus overlapped, our study did not include the children committed by the juvenile court. It did not deal with the children in the care of the regular placing-out organizations, but was restricted to those children who were received and directed by institutional authorities.

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of the general circumstances surrounding the child, than to discover and record for study and action the conditions which created the need behind the application. She also helped the dismissal committee to look after children who were discharged, and accomplished valuable results.

The other institutions had no special facilities for such work. None of them had definite knowledge of the lives of more than a small percentage of the children who had been discharged. From the institutional records we were usually able to learn the following points only: the child's name; by whom he had been sent (although as the entry in regard to this item was sometimes "friend," "church," "deaconess," and so forth, it was not always a clue); whether or not he had a juvenile court record; the child's sex, religion, nationality, birthplace and date of birth, present age; whether or not the parents had been living at the time of the application, the date when the child was received into the institution and the date when he was discharged. Additional scattering facts were sometimes discovered, such as the number of other members of the family in the same or in other institutions, the rate of payment, and the family or person to whom the child had been discharged. We were sometimes able to learn from the institutions the supposed reason for institutional care and the plan for the child's future, but there was not enough such information to make tabulation possible.

We were obliged, therefore, to forage to an unexpected extent for the needed information concerning the children and their families. Some of the sources were almost inaccessible because of the bad traction facilities and the mountainous character of the back country, and were reached only after persistent effort requiring much time and ingenuity on the part of our visitors. Many of the families had moved.

The records of the children who had been cared for in the preceding four years by the five co-operating institutions were made the basis of our inquiry. Of these there were some 1,300, but many of the records had to be discarded at the outset because they contained no addresses upon which we could make a start. Out of the remainder, 645, chosen at random, were followed up (during fifteen months of 1908 and 1909) before our study closed.

Sixty-six records had finally to be abandoned because the few clues we had for them were defective beyond repair.

We thus secured for study fairly complete histories of 579 children representing 275 families. In these families there were, besides the 579 children for whom records were secured, 84 children who were or had been in co-operating institutions.\*

#### IMMEDIATE GROUNDS OF APPEAL

The classification in Table 3 shows in outline the immediate grounds of appeal which sent the applicants to the institution doors. These grounds were of course not necessarily the causes of dependency, but they were manifestations of causes, some of them beyond the control of the families.

As shown in Table 3, foremost among the apparent grounds for institutional care was half-orphanage. Death of the father or mother was found in 103 cases, or in 37 per cent of the 275 families studied. In 46 families it was the father who had died and in 57 the mother. In only 17 (6.2 per cent) of the families were both parents dead. It was among the cases of half-orphanage that we found the largest number of self-respecting mothers out at work, and of honest fathers who, in the absence of the mothers, had not been able to hold the home together. These were families which had oftenest expected to reorganize when the children became of age, and which had especially needed sustained encouragement and resourceful help. Desertion in 40 families (15 per cent) gave us the next highest figure: desertion by the father in 36; by the mother in two; and abandonment of the children by both parents in two. The mere fact that one or the other parent, or that both, had left their families in the lurch was the immediate reason for precipitating 96 children upon the institutions. Next in numerical importance came separation in 22 families (8 per cent); defects of character in 17 families (6.2 per cent); death and defects of character in 16 families (5.8 per cent); death of mother and subsequent abandonment of children by father in 16 cases (5.8 per cent); so-called incorrigibility and defectiveness of child in 14 families (5.1 per cent); desertion and defects of character in 11 families (4 per cent); illness of parents

\* Information concerning all the children, 663 in number, is given in two of the tables of this chapter.



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TABLE 3.—IMMEDIATE REASONS DISCOVERED TO UNDERLIE APPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL CARE OF CHILDREN, IN 275 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS

<i>Immediate Reasons Underlying Application for Institutional Care of Children</i>	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN RECEIVING INSTI- TUTIONAL CARE		CHILDREN RE- CEIVING INSTI- TUTIONAL CARE	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
1. Death				
Of father . . . . .	46		123	
Of mother . . . . .	57		156	
Of both parents . . . . .	17		32	
Total . . . . .	120	43.6	311	47.0
2. Desertion or abandonment				
By father . . . . .	36		84	
By mother . . . . .	2		5	
By both parents . . . . .	2		7	
Total . . . . .	40	14.5	96	14.5
3. Separation of parents . . . . .	22	8.0	44	6.6
4. Defects of character				
Of father . . . . .	6		21	
Of both parents . . . . .	11		21	
Total . . . . .	17	6.2	42	6.3
5. Illness				
Of father . . . . .	3		9	
Of mother . . . . .	6		14	
Of both parents . . . . .	1		4	
Total . . . . .	10	3.7	27	4.1
6. Death of mother, subsequent abandon- ment of children by father . . . . .	16	5.8	36	5.4
7. Death and defects of character				
Death of father, defects of character of mother . . . . .	6		12	
Death of mother, defects of character of father . . . . .	10		29	
Total . . . . .	16	5.8	41	6.2
8. Desertion and defects of character				
Desertion by father, defects of char- acter of mother . . . . .	8		21	
Desertion by mother, defects of char- acter of father . . . . .	3		7	
Total . . . . .	11	4.0	28	4.2
9. Child incorrigible or feeble-minded . . . . .	14	5.1	16	2.4
10. Insufficient income . . . . .	3	1.1	8	1.2
11. Not classified . . . . .	6	2.2	14	2.1
Grand total. . . . .	275	100.0	663	100.0

in 10 families (3.6 per cent); unclassified misfortunes in six families (2.2 per cent); insufficient income in three families (1.1 per cent). Poverty entered as a factor in many of the other classes, but in these last three families only was insufficient income the immediate causal factor.

According to Miss Byington's study of household budgets in Homestead\*—which is fairly typical of the District as a whole—only when a man's earnings averaged more than \$15† a week could we expect a working margin above those expenditures which should go for the mere physical necessities of a family. Our data as to the seasonal and overcrowded occupations, when the earnings of the men fell below \$15, and as to the supplemental earnings of wives outside the home, were not trustworthy enough to furnish a statistical basis for generalizations as to yearly incomes, although information on both these points helped us in individual cases to judge a family's potential resources. Judged, however, by the most reliable statements we could secure for 205 male heads of families, 61.9 per cent had earned above \$15 when working.

It was significant (see Tables 4 to 10 on the following pages) that in more than half of these families the parents were American born; that in a third of the cases both parents were still living; that a very large proportion of parents were under fifty years of age when their children became dependent, and nearly 50 per cent of the fathers and over 40 per cent of the mothers were between 30 and 40, and over 11 per cent of the fathers and 43 per cent of the mothers were in their twenties. Premature orphanage is shown by the fact that of 77 fathers who had died, three-fifths, and of the 89 mothers who had died, nearly two-thirds were under forty years of age. In over half of the families there were only from one to three children; and so far as we could discover only one-third of the families had received relief from charitable agencies or other organizations before applying to the institutions. But these facts become still more significant when coupled with another created by the admission rules of the institutions; namely, that more than half of the children in the institutions were between the ages of five and ten—a period when they particularly needed home influences and individual care.

\* Byington, Margaret F.: Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town.

† We found instances, of course, where a man working steadily at \$15 or under a week, was better off than a man who worked part time at \$20.

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TABLE 4.—NATIVITY OF PARENTS IN 247 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS<sup>a</sup>

<i>Nativity of Parents</i>	FAMILIES	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Both parents native born . . . . .	137	55.5
Both parents foreign born . . . . .	73	29.5
One parent native born and the other foreign born . . . . .	37	15.0
Total. . . . .	247	100.0

<sup>a</sup> For 28 of the 275 families studied, the nativity of parents is unknown.

TABLE 5.—VITAL STATUS WHEN THE INVESTIGATION WAS MADE OF PARENTS IN 275 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS

<i>Vital Status</i>	FAMILIES	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Both parents living . . . . .	90	32.7
Both parents dead . . . . .	21	7.6
Father dead, mother living . . . . .	69	25.1
Father dead, status of mother not known . . . . .	1	.4
Mother dead, father living . . . . .	86	31.3
Mother dead, status of father not known . . . . .	3	1.1
Mother living, status of father not known. . . . .	5	1.8
Total. . . . .	275	100.0

TABLE 6.—AGES AT THE TIME THEIR CHILDREN BECAME DEPENDENT OF 159 FATHERS AND 144 MOTHERS HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS AND KNOWN TO BE LIVING AT THE TIME OF THE INVESTIGATION<sup>a</sup>

<i>Age of Parents at Time Children Became Dependent</i>	FATHERS		MOTHERS	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Less than 20 years . . . . .	..	..	2	1.4
20 years and less than 30 years . . . . .	18	11.3	62	43.0
30 years and less than 40 years . . . . .	79	49.7	58	40.3
40 years and less than 50 years . . . . .	50	31.4	20	13.9
50 years and less than 60 years . . . . .	10	6.3	2	1.4
60 years and more . . . . .	2	1.3	..	..
Total . . . . .	159	100.0	144	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Information could not be secured as to the ages of 17 of the 176 fathers known to be living and of 20 of the 164 mothers known to be living.



# PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

TABLE 7.—AGES AT DEATH OF 77 FATHERS AND 89 MOTHERS HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS<sup>a</sup>

<i>Age of Parent at Death</i>	FATHERS		MOTHERS	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
20 years and less than 30 years . . .	12	15.6	13	14.6
30 years and less than 40 years . . .	35	45.4	44	49.5
40 years and less than 50 years . . .	26	33.8	30	33.7
50 years and less than 60 years . . .	4	5.2	2	2.2
Total . . . . .	77	100.0	89	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Information could not be secured as to the ages of 14 of the 91 fathers known to be dead and of 21 of the 110 mothers known to be dead.

TABLE 8.—CHILDREN PER FAMILY IN 275 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS<sup>a</sup>

The heavy type indicates families in which all the children were or had been in institutions.

<i>Number of Children per Family</i>	FAMILIES HAVING IN INSTITUTIONS						ALL FAMILIES	<i>Children in Institutions from Families Having Each Specified Number of Children</i>
	<i>One Child</i>	<i>Two Children</i>	<i>Three Children</i>	<i>Four Children</i>	<i>Five Children</i>	<i>Six Children</i>		
One. .	26						26	26
Two .	13	41					54	95
Three .	10	23	32				65	152
Four .	5	15	21	17			58	166
Five .	7	7	11	5	5		35	99
Six .	3	3	6	3	6	2	23	81
Seven .	1	2	..	2	2	..	7	23
Eight .	1	..	..	1	1	..	3	10
Nine .	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1
Ten .	..	1	..	2	..	..	3	10
Total	67	92	70	30	14	2	275	663 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Of the 663 institutional children enumerated in this table, 579 were the children studied in the co-operating institutions, and 84 were children from the same 275 families who were or had been in co-operating institutions.

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TABLE 9.—RELIEF SITUATION IN 275 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS <sup>a</sup>

<i>Relief Situation</i>	FAMILIES	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
No evidence of relief discovered . . . . .	140	50.9
Relief received from relatives only . . . . .	43	15.6
Relief received from charitable agencies or other organizations	92	33.5
Total . . . . .	275	100.0

<sup>a</sup> One hundred thirteen fathers and 32 mothers were found to have belonged to organizations yielding benefits, such as fraternal orders, unions, insurance companies, etc., but no reliable data could be secured as to the amounts of benefits derived from these sources except in eight cases in which limited pensions from benefit societies were paid to the families of workmen killed in trade accidents and one case in which a father received compensation during temporary disability due to a trade accident.

TABLE 10.—AGE AND SEX OF 557 CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS STUDIED <sup>a</sup>

<i>Age Period</i>	CHILDREN IN EACH AGE PERIOD			
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>All Children</i>	
			<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Less than 1 year . . . . .	3	4	7	1.3
1 year and less than 5 years . . . . .	88	61	149	26.7
5 years and less than 10 years . . . . .	160	128	288	51.7
10 years and less than 15 years . . . . .	82	25	107	19.2
15 years and more . . . . .	5	1	6	1.1
Total . . . . .	338	219	557	100.0

<sup>a</sup> The ages of 11 of the boys and 11 of the girls included in the study could not be ascertained.

The situation revealed by these tables was surely serious enough to call for the closest scrutiny of any and all grounds which were considered sufficient warrant for so radical an upheaval of the natural relationships of all these children as was involved in substituting institutional care for home surroundings. The situation called, secondly, for facts to show whether the temporary guardians of this great fund of childhood were fulfilling the functions of foster parents which they claimed to

be, and whether their work, from the social point of view, was sound and good. Or, putting the situation more tersely: What justification was there for the intervention of the institution? If the intervention was justified, was the institution performing its functions effectively?

The institutions had no data by which they could describe statistically their stewardship of child bodies and minds, and our house to house visits were of course such as to throw little light as to how much the children had gained from them in stature and health, education and equipment for life. There was no practicable way, therefore, by which we could answer the second question more fully than has been done in Chapter II, by measuring inductively the results of institutional life upon the development of the children given over to the charge of the five co-operating agencies.

#### HOME LIFE OF THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES

It was possible, however, to classify the families investigated so as to throw light upon the primary questions, whether the institutions were doing unnecessary work by caring for children whose families could and should have maintained them; whether or not they in any way attempted to strengthen the homes temporarily unfitted to keep the children, or to protect the children from future control by parents who were unfit. To this end we divided the 275 families into three groups according to their degree of social cohesion:

Group A.—Those families where two or more members of the original family group were living together at the time of the investigation, or where a parent was maintaining a home to which a child might return. Of these there were 128, or 46 per cent.

Group B.—Those families where a parent or parents were found at the time of the investigation, but were not living with any member of the original family group nor maintaining homes to which a child might return. This group includes mothers and fathers living in boarding houses or with relatives, and mothers working out as domestics. Of these there were 101, or 37 per cent.

Group C.—Families in which the parents were dead, insane, or could not be found. Of these there were 46, or 17 per cent.

The result of this gathering and assembling of data was as follows:



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TABLE 11.—HOME INFLUENCES, PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES AT THE TIME OF THE INVESTIGATION IN 111 FAMILIES OF GROUP A<sup>a</sup>

<i>Influences within Home</i>	FAMILIES, BY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES				ALL FAMILIES	
	<i>Envi- ron- ment Favor- able, Re- sources Ade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Favor- able, Re- sources Inade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Un- favor- able, Re- sources Ade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Un- favor- able, Re- sources Inade- quate</i>		
Class I Parents who were adjudged self respecting, conscious of parental responsibility, and solicitous of the future good of their children . . .	8	17	1	26	52	46.9
Class II Parents who were adjudged respectable, but had habits or standards of living that would be detrimental to a child's welfare; whose standards, because of weakness of character, inefficiency or inability did not tend to rise . . .	1	8	1	22	32	28.8
Class III Parents who had habits or standards of living that would be a distinct menace to a child's welfare; who were of questionable character, immoral in conjugal relationships, lacking in parental responsibility or mentally defective . . .	..	2	1	24	27	24.3
Total . . .	9	27	3	72	111	100.0

<sup>a</sup> See preceding text. The Group A families are those where two or more members were living together or where a parent was maintaining a home to which a child might return. Of the 128 families in Group A, three could not be classified as to either home influences, environment, or resources, and three placed in Class I, seven placed in Class II, and four placed in Class III, according to home influences, could not be classified as to environment and resources. These are, therefore, omitted from the table.

*Group A*

It was amazing to find that out of our 275 families 128, or nearly one-half, had homes of varying degrees of desirability and comfort. These fell into Group A. This did not mean that all of these homes were suitable or adequately supported; it merely meant that out of 275 families in which there were dependent children, 128 still had homes while institutional care was given.

To arrive at a clearer basis for judgment with respect to them, these 128 families in Group A were again divided into three classes, according to the character of the parents, and then in turn for purposes of analysis were cross classified as to environment and resources. Those families in which the parent or parents were self-supporting, conscious of parental responsibility, and solicitous for the future good of their children, were entered in Class I. Fifty-five of the families visited fell into this class. It will readily be seen that a child should not have been separated from such families unless he had some special physical need which his own relatives could not meet, and which the institution was in a position to supply. For example, take the case of the following family:

The neighborhood was rural, in a market gardening section. The house had vegetable gardens on either side, was comfortable and in good condition. The father was once a farmer but having injured his leg, had had to give up farming. He had then invested in real estate and stocks, and had earned enough money to provide a comfortable income. Just before our inquiry the stocks had depreciated somewhat in value, and he was not getting on so well. His six sons were all bright. Five years previous three of them had typhoid fever. One of the youngest had not been expected to live, but had finally pulled through, though he never again was of normal mentality and continued to be extremely nervous. The mother, tired out from the strain of nursing, had herself developed typhoid fever and died. The father took the place of housewife; he attended to the cooking, put up the fruit, cleaned the house, and did the washing, although he hired a woman to come in and iron. Of all this he made a success, but he could not cope with the serious after effects of Henry's illness. He sent him to a public school for five years, but the boy no longer liked to study because he could not learn. The father then boarded him in an institution with the idea of having him receive industrial training. He paid at the

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rate of \$4.00 a week and also supplied his clothes. The physician who had treated the boy said that he might improve after the adolescent period and that he needed careful guidance for some years. The institution was not accustomed to give special attention to exceptional children and the boy had not progressed there.

In seven other cases, the families falling into Class I had adequate resources and homes in favorable environments. In two the fathers were widowers; in two more the mothers had died and the fathers had remarried. In another case a normal family of father and mother with several children had sent one son to an institution as "incurable." One widow was keeping a number of her children with her, while another mother was living alone in her house. In contrast to these families, 43 falling in our class of respectable homes had inadequate resources. An example of this latter type was:

Mrs. Bates, widow with three children. The father had died insane ten years prior to our inquiry. He had been a steady, skilful mechanic, earning upon an average \$24 a week. The mother had struggled along for three years, and then broken down. She placed the children in an institution, and went out as a night cleaner in an office building for \$7.00 a week. Through a philanthropic housing enterprise, the mother and her son had secured two rooms at a rent of \$2.00 a month, but she could not pay board for the children at the institution. She was an excellent little woman in every way and possessed the happy art of home-making. The boy had been discharged from the institution two years before and was now cash boy in a department store. The two little girls, aged ten and twelve, were still in the institution.

It may be mentioned in passing, that until the discharge of the boy the institution had been spending more money upon these children every week than the mother was able to earn. This was the sort of family where a pension to the mother would seem to have been not only financially more economical than institutional provision, but the best possible way to protect the children.

A similar case was that of a family whose wage-earner, a structural worker, had been killed in a trade accident. Fair compensation had been made by the company and by the Carnegie Relief Fund, but having no one to advise her wisely, the widow had lost this capital in trying to enter the business world, and had finally become a department store clerk. Her wage of \$7.00 a week was inadequate to support her children. She was thrifty, intelligent, and desirous to re-establish her home.



In one of the typical homes in which both negative factors entered, that is, in which the surroundings were not favorable and the resources were inadequate,—of this kind there were 26 in all,—the father was a laborer in the street car barns at a weekly wage of \$10. We found him to be tuberculous, and the mother had never been strong since an attack of typhoid fever contracted from a contaminated water supply in her house. It was at the time of her illness that the children were placed in an institution. The home was in a district in which mills, saloons, and railroad tracks abounded.

Class II was on the median line. It included those homes in which the parent or parents were respectable, but had habits and standards of living which would be detrimental to a child's welfare; homes in which the parents lacked a tendency or desire to raise those standards, who were weak in character or inefficient. Thirty-nine families were represented. A typical example of this class follows:

Mr. Cairns' children were regarded as the "nicest children in the asylum." He had come from a good old Scottish family. His wife, who had died of tuberculosis, had been a woman of exceptional character, but her illness had made her an invalid for a number of years, during which time her husband had done everything in his power for her. He was a tinner earning from \$20 to \$25 a week. After his wife's death the father had tried to keep the home together by engaging a housekeeper, but this had not proved satisfactory. Following the advice of his minister, he finally put three of his four children into an institution and went out to board. He had been a drinking man before his marriage, but Mrs. Cairns had had a restraining influence upon him and he had stopped using liquor until after her death, when he again became intemperate. The relatives tried to persuade him to move to more respectable quarters than those in which he lived, but he refused to pay more rent. Some of them even asked permission to take the children, but the father was unwilling to scatter them in different families. He kept his life insurance policies for them and wanted to give them college educations. He was trying to save up in order to bring them home, but was drinking heavily.

A typical family in Class II whose environment was favorable, but whose resources were inadequate, was that of the Dodges.

The father had died five years previously. He had been a bricklayer earning an average of \$24 a week. At the time of the smallpox

epidemic in 1904, two of his eight children had had the disease. Being quarantined the father was deprived of work, and none of the children were allowed to go to school. After the first child recovered and the quarantine was lifted, another child came down with the disease, and the situation was repeated. Mr. Dodge became discouraged and drank more than usual. He was afraid he would not be able to pay his debts. Shortly after this his shoulder was injured and his arm broken in a trade accident. The arm healed but the shoulder caused him much distress up to the time of his death from "heart failure" two months later. Mrs. Dodge went out washing by the day, taking her youngest child with her; her eldest son went to work, and five of the other children were placed in an institution. Two years afterward one of these, a son, was old enough to work and the two boys were able to pay the household expenses without their mother's help. While she was a good woman, Mrs. Dodge was not as solicitous a mother as one might wish. She needed encouragement and a friendly visitor.

Class III represented the homes in which the parent or parents had habits or standards which were a distinct menace to a child's welfare; those in which the parents were questionable characters, immoral in conjugal relationships, lacking a sense of parental responsibility, or in some cases having defective mentality. Obviously none of the 31 families falling into this class were among those to whom children should be returned.

There were the three Eaton children whose father was a teamster earning from \$10 to \$12 a week. He drank to excess and had deserted. The mother and her children had gone to live with a sister, who provided for them all until the burden became too heavy. The mother had then sent the children to an institution and worked out by the day. She never sued her husband for non-support, "as the children were being provided for" and she "did not want to bother." He soon returned and she went to live with him. At the time of our inquiry one of the managers had requested a special report upon the family, as the mother had sent some board money and had asked that it all be credited to one account. She had already paid up her indebtedness on one child and been able to take her out. She intended to secure a second child in this way. Inquiry showed that she was an unfit guardian for them and that the father periodically drank to excess.

# PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

TABLE 12.—HOME INFLUENCES AND CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIP OF PARENTS AT THE TIME OF THE INVESTIGATION  
IN 96 FAMILIES OF GROUP B<sup>a</sup>

<i>Influences within Home</i>	FAMILIES, BY CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIP OF PARENTS			ALL FAMILIES	
	<i>Fathers Widowed or Deserted</i>	<i>Mothers Widowed or Deserted</i>	<i>Parents Sepa- rated</i>		
				<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Class I Parents who were adjudged self respecting, conscious of parental responsibility, and solicitous for the future good of their children . . . .	14	17	..	31	32.3
Class II Parents who were adjudged respectable but had habits or standards of living that would be detrimental to a child's welfare; whose standards, because of weakness of character, inefficiency, or inability, did not tend to rise . . . .	14	13	1	28	29.2
Class III Parents who had habits or standards of living that would be a distinct menace to a child's welfare; who were of questionable character, immoral in conjugal relationships, lacking in parental responsibility or mentally defective . . . . .	17	16	4	37	38.5
Total . . . . .	45	46	5	96	100.0

<sup>a</sup> See text preceding Table 11. The Group B families are those where a parent or parents were found at the time of the investigation, but were not living with any member of the original family group nor maintaining homes to which a child might return. The group includes mothers and fathers living in boarding houses or with relatives, and mothers working out as domestics. Of the 101 families in Group B, one, consisting of a father, widowed or deserted, two, consisting of mothers, widowed or deserted, and two, where the parents were separated, could not be classified as to parental influences.



Conditions comparable to these were found in families where the fathers or mothers were mentally defective.

*Group B*

To return to our major grouping, 101 families (37 per cent) were not maintaining homes and thus fell into Group B. This group, as has been stated, is made up of parents who were located at the time of the inquiry but who, because of death, desertion, or separation, were not living with any member of the original family. It includes cases where a parent lived in a boarding house, or with relatives, and cases of mothers living out as domestics. With this description in mind, the group may be given the same sub-classification of parental influences as that applied to Group A, and may be further classified as to the conjugal relationship of parents.

As an illustration of the problems and struggles of widowers in Class I of Group B, Mr. Federheis may be mentioned:

Federheis and his wife, German Lutherans, had lived happily on a farm. The wife had died of typhoid fever at the time of an epidemic. After her death the father had kept a housekeeper for nearly four years, but had found it impossible to get an efficient woman to live in the country for the price he could pay. He moved to the city, but even then did not succeed in making satisfactory arrangements to preserve his home, so he put the two children into an orphan asylum. Being a farmer by training he could not obtain skilled work in the city and became a teamster. The best position he could find was one in which he had to cover 12 routes a day, necessitating very long hours. He worked hard, paid the children's board, but finally, after four years, broke down, crippled by rheumatism, and the children became dependent upon the charity of an institution. He was a man of excellent reputation, whose ambition in life was to have his children go through the high school and profit by industrial training. He was naturally strong and rugged, and his breakdown appears to have been of an easily preventable kind. This man seemed to have needed a change in conditions of work and the children a well father. They had already been in the institution six years at an estimated outlay of some \$2,000. How much would it have cost to preserve this home or the father's health?

A widowed mother of this class is represented in the following case:

Mrs. Gimbel had three children; her two little sons were in an institution. Her husband, a temperate, strong, and industrious man, had been killed in an open-switch collision while employed on a railroad. The wife had received no damages beyond the funeral expenses, because her husband had worked for the company only about three months, and the neighbors told her that she had no right to expect anything more. She was an excellent woman. We found her clerking in a cheap department store. Her health had become wrecked from overtime work in insanitary surroundings. She impressed the visitor as being tuberculous and in imminent danger of a complete physical breakdown. Her wages were small and irregular because she was often too ill to work more than two or three days a week. She was living with a sister who was also poor. In exchange for this home she was doing the housework, cooking, and so forth, before going to work in the morning and after she returned at night. She had an aunt, a woman of superior intelligence, who took a deep interest in the children and their welfare. She was educating her eldest niece, who lived with the grandmother, and hoped later to send one of the little boys to Girard College where he could be educated without cost.

In Class II are cases such as the following:

A typical father of this class was Mr. Hawks, a mill worker, forty-five years old, earning \$3.00 a day. After the death of his first wife, a prosperous aunt had taken the three little boys for a time, but was sorry she had done so because she thought it had relieved the father too much of his responsibility. He was fond of having a good time, was intemperate, and neglected his children. They had later been placed in an institution. When the father had remarried he had taken the boys home. His second wife had eight children, five of whom had died. When her own death occurred the relatives did not feel able to assume the responsibilities of the five remaining children, who were accordingly placed in two institutions. The father was working irregularly and the relatives were helping to pay the children's board.

Wilma Ives was the mother of a three-year-old illegitimate child who had been born at the city home. Both had stayed there for two years. One of the officers had tried to secure some money from the child's father but without success, so the mother had been advised to put the child into an institution and to go out as a domestic. We found her living in a boarding house and working in a hotel. She seemed exceedingly fond of her little girl and afraid to have her placed out in a family for fear that the people might either abuse her or grow so fond of her that they

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would want to keep her. She also thought she would not be allowed to visit her child in a private family as often as she could in an institution. A year after we first saw this mother the child had become so affected by a congenital disease that she had been removed to a hospital, where she was dying.

The men of Class III whose control would be a menace to childhood are represented by the following:

Mr. James, a clerk thirty-seven years old, earned \$12 a week. He drank to excess, was dishonest, and had neglected his children. The mother, a respectable and honest woman, had died of tuberculosis, worn out from trying to keep the family together. There were a number of good relatives on the mother's side who had cared for the children for a year after her death and would have liked to take them again, but they could not afford to do so because the father had not kept his promise about contributing toward their support. The relatives paid a little to the institution now and then. No steps were being taken to protect the two children legally from their father.

The women of Class III may be briefly characterized by the mention of Mrs. Kelly, who drank heavily:

Although the managers suspected that Mrs. Kelly was addicted to some drug habit, they had made no investigation, and did not know that she drank. The winter our inquiry was made she had gone to the institution with a hard luck story about being out of work and unable to pay for her children. She played so successfully upon the emotions of the managers that she was temporarily employed by the institution as resident seamstress and came into frequent contact with her children. After a report of the true conditions was sent to the managers they filed a petition at the juvenile court and secured legal custody of the children.

### *Group C*

Group C contains the 46 families (17 per cent) in which the parents were dead, insane, or could not be found,—the wholly destroyed households. The immediate reasons for the institutional care of the children in these families was death of both parents in 20, death of father and insanity of mother in one, abandonment in 25. But it could not have been said with justice that even these children were homeless until their resources had



been determined by an exhaustive inquiry concerning their relatives and friends. It was not possible for us to push such an inquiry into these cases; therefore we give no illustration of this class.

**SUMMARY.** The foregoing classification of investigated families puts the situation before us in its broad phases. In the view of the institutions, the homes of all these children were failures. Only upon such belief would the institutions be justified in stepping in to assume the responsibilities of father, mother, and often school teacher, to these hundreds of growing children. That such was the case with the 46 families of Group C may be granted, although not without reservation, and also with the 31 families in Group A and the 37 in Group B.\* All these were put into the lowest class because the parents were defectives, confirmed drunkards, or otherwise obviously unfitted for guardianship. Together with the families of Group C these make 114 families, or 41 per cent of the total 275. At the other tip end of the scale are the eight homes of Group A, Class I, in which the parents were not only concerned for the welfare of their children, but were able to care for them and to live in respectable neighborhoods.

Between these extremes, manifesting every grade of character, resource, and environment, lie the remaining families—over half of the total in number.

No one, after meditating upon these tables, would attempt to generalize and to say, offhand, that the households they describe were worthless, or vicious, or failures beyond repair, or that the children were homeless, friendless, or destitute. It would be presumptuous, on the basis of an investigation which was not followed by treatment, to say how many of these families could have been rehabilitated at the date upon which they came to the attention of the institutions. But a glance at the tables in which are indicated the number of parents who still had homes and habits needing a little bracing, or who, having lost their homes, were eager to re-establish them and might have been helped to that end, can scarcely fail to make apparent the fact that a great number of children might have been knitted into their natural households by wisely directed social work. Such work was not being done.

\* See Tables 11 and 12, pp. 48 and 53

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A reading of the illustrative cases themselves leaves no doubt that in many cases knotted problems could have been untied and pending entanglements avoided. Here indeed we find that failure to combine good intent and knowledge of the material dealt with, which cripples the work of these children's institutions and makes the technique of their management contrast so unfavorably with that of the factories of the Pittsburgh District.

### SOCIAL BOOKKEEPING

We have already pointed out how fundamentally important are methods of securing, preserving, and, above all, of utilizing social information. Our inquiry into the methods employed by the five co-operating institutions showed in detail how much painstaking work had been lost because effort had not been made to learn the salient facts in every case. Too often the labors of managers and employes, and the possible benefits from expenditures of money, were nullified, and the welfare and happiness of fathers, mothers, and children destroyed by administrative gaps which began at the first point of contact between the families and the institution.

Let us take by way of illustration those 66 cases in which the records at first gave promise that the families could be found, but which we had to drop because of imperfect clues. The visitors exhausted every conceivable source of information in their efforts to find these families. Yet in 17 cases the children were still in the institution, 48 had been discharged, and one had died.

Some of the reasons for receiving these children had been recorded at the institutions in this wise: "Mother deserted; father cannot provide." "Father deserted; mother works and cannot keep." "Mother remarried." "Parents separated." "Institution says mother drinks; no address." A particularly flagrant instance was that of certain children who had been discharged to their mother by one private institution, and who afterward spent two years at the county almshouse with her. She claimed that their father had deserted them. After the mother was discharged from the almshouse she entered the children at a second private institution. Although this last institution stated

that the mother was known to be immoral, the children were, upon her request, returned to her for a second time; but no addresses, either of her or of her relatives, had been recorded. There were no clues to this family at any of the three institutions which had helped to care for them.

The length of time these "no clue" cases had spent in the institutions varied from three days to the fifty-four years of one woman who, entering very young, and not being very bright, had never been discharged. Her life history, blank as it was, lies before us—with the exception of the all-important first chapter. But what had become of the little "no clue" children who had been returned to the care of unknown guardians or placed in forgotten foster homes? This no one could say. Yet meager as the records were, they indicated that the families to which these children belonged had been sadly in need of help, and there was no indication that any constructive measures had been taken for them.

One institution showed the visitor a regular teacher's register. The names of the children had been entered at one side and on the first of every month a line had been drawn in the square opposite the name of each child still in the institution. When some empty squares were noticed, the person in charge said, "That means that those children have left. We do not know when or with whom."

The loss of identity caused by careless records is one of the tragic points involved. In later years, information which may seem trivial at the time of a child's entrance may be of incalculable value. For instance:

The progressive superintendent of a large Catholic orphanage received a letter from a woman sixty-five years old, living in another state, who said she had been brought up in that orphanage from her early babyhood. She dimly recalled that some brothers and sisters of hers were inmates at the same time. She had come into possession of quite a fortune and was anxious to share it with them and to gather them about her. Could this priest tell her how to reach them? The priest eagerly looked back over the records and found the names of the children, but all that was entered in the "Discharged Column" was the date when they went away.

A discharged boy told us that he remembered a little brother who



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had been in the institution with him years before, but who had been placed out later on. He had never been able to learn anything more about this brother—not because the institution thought it unwise for him to have this information, but because it had not kept a record of the placement.

The clerk of a county home had sent some children to an institution under a name which the institution thought was wrong although it continued to use it. When, in an effort to find the children's parents and relatives, we appealed to the clerk for verification of it, he said, "We put names down the way they sound; hardly ever ask anybody to spell them nowadays, because we get so used to foreigners who do not know how."

One little boy, who had twice been admitted to an institution, was reported as a whole orphan. He was unsatisfactorily placed out for adoption in four different families. After the last placement the institution had not kept track of him. It happened that, through a relief society, we stumbled across the boy's family and learned that there was a drunken mother to whom he had returned. Under her influence he had also become a drunkard, and both had disappeared.

Many other such instances might be given. The day is past when, for fear of seeming to under-rate the charity of those who have generously given to the poor children of the community, the community should fail to hold the managers to their social responsibilities in this respect as in others.

The number of the cases concerning which no detailed information was secured would have been larger if the visitors had shown less persistence in developing clues in out-of-the-way quarters. For example, one enterprising young woman on our staff started off with no other information than that a certain family might have been known in a vaguely defined district on the north side of Pittsburgh. She went to this district and began making inquiries upon a mere chance of stumbling across the information. After her twentieth effort she found a shopkeeper who identified the family and was familiar with its history. The father was a tramp who sometimes begged at his door; in fact, this vagabond had made a covert retreat over the shopkeeper's back fence, with a pie, that very week. As a result of the information the visitor gained it was possible to work out a constructive program for the vagabond's little daughter.

Some of the institutions had accepted addresses of mothers "care of the General Delivery" at the city post office and had insisted upon no others. In two such cases we found the mothers living in disreputable resorts. They were scheming to deceive the institution managers by a show of respectability at the time of making application for their children's discharge. The true situation would then have been concealed in case the institution had tardily chosen to investigate. This demonstrated not only the need for first hand study of families by skilled workers, but also the danger of relying for information upon visits made at times when families are especially interested in creating a favorable impression.

It is plain that such careless record keeping as is shown by the illustrations given above, puts an institution at a disadvantage in dealing with applicants; it is equally plain that it prevents any inventory on the part of the institution as to the success or failure of its own work. It leads to such concealment of results that it is perhaps natural enough that the managers have not seen the need for remedial and constructive programs in dealing with their charges, but have been content with what they have done for them while they have slept in the institution dormitories and eaten at the institution tables. Failure on the part of an institution to co-operate with other social agencies aggravated this loose and inadequate system of record keeping. The ready way these two factors in conjunction played into the hands of community evils was seen in a number of instances where, in the course of such a general inquiry as our own, certain families turned up again and again in the charitable and correctional field. The institutions placed so little value upon records, that, even in the cases of transferred children, they did not exchange information.

One father refused to support his six children "because they were mostly girls." One was a boy. The mother lacked affection for them and they were put first into the county home and then into an institution. Twice she took them all out, but three of them were re-admitted a third time and stayed there seven years. Then the institution placed one of them, Lou, with an apparently suitable woman who, however, gave her to an immoral aunt who abused her. Later the girl married. Another sister, Helen, was placed out in a good home but was not allowed to

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have fun or friends. One day on the street a girl called to her "Hello Helen! Don't you know your own sister Lou?" Helen was so delighted that she followed Lou home. This displeased the foster mother so that she would not allow them to have anything to do with each other afterward. When the little boy found two of his sisters had been placed out he was so lonesome that he ran away and went home. The influences of the home were not good. He became demoralized and disappeared. One of the daughters who had not been returned to the institution a third time eventually went to live with her mother. Later it became necessary to send her to a rescue home for girls. She was then committed three times to the reform school. After her discharge the family secured a place for her with a private family. She finally married and was doing fairly well. Two of the other children who did not go back to the institution a third time, contracted tuberculosis from their mother and died just before she did. The father died in the county home.

Or again:

The mother of one family of degenerates was described in the institution records as "a poor dejected kind of woman, who had had 15 children." The father was in the workhouse. The various children had come under the care of four children's institutions, a placing-out agency, the humane society, and the reform school.

In all the dealings with these last three families—dealings which had cost the state and the charitable public an untold amount of money—the agencies concerned had made no studies of the homes, had exchanged no records and had suggested no constructive programs for the protection of the public or for keeping the families themselves from recurrent misfortunes.

## CONSERVATION OF FAMILY TIES

The failure to take fully into account and to conserve possible margins of family strength led to needless child dependency, not because of intentional imposition upon an institution but because affairs needed a skilful turn which the applicants themselves could not, or had not tried to give.

Among the cases studied in Class A the failure of the outer circle of relatives to join hands around the children in an unfortunate family was sometimes caused by differences of standards and religion, by family peculiarities, or by sheer poverty. Sometimes, however, it was due to the fact that no one of wisdom and exper-



ience had befriended the children and attempted to bring relatives together at the right time. Trivial as some of the complaints of kinsfolk against kinsfolk seemed to be, the authorities had usually accepted them as insuperable obstacles to other than institutional care for the children. Occasionally, no doubt, some of the obstacles were insuperable, but others would have given way before the flexible program of a vigorous friendly visitor to the children's homes.

A father who had been through a sad experience said, "No relatives for me. When I want help, I go to strangers." An amiable widower stated that he had no objection to having his children placed out as long as they were not put with any of his kin. Another complained that his relatives "was raised too low." A quiet little woman said, "My best friends are not my relatives but the little dollars that I earn every week." The kindred had their own grievances. One group of conscientious but struggling relatives was afraid to be friendly to a mother who had placed four out of her nine children in institutions, because they believed such an encouragement would lead her "to land in on them with a whole bundle." Contrasted with such instances we found undeveloped situations in which the institutions had voluntarily assumed responsibilities which relatives could and would have carried. For example, one can not help admiring the good aunt, of aggressive temperament, who had never been looked up until we found her, but who checkmated the plans of the three institutions among which charitable folk had scattered the children of a destitute relative. Two had been placed out in different parts of the country and one was still in an institution. Against all obstacles she collected them and reunited them under her own roof.

Here is another case in point:

Three children recorded by the institution as "Homeless. No one to care for." The father had been killed in a trade accident. The mother had died of tuberculosis, and, prior to her death, had placed the children in an institution, against the wishes of her relatives who were eager to take them. Five years after this we visited an aunt who had always wanted to bring up one of the boys. She had not questioned the action of the mother in sending the children to an asylum because it was a dying wish. The institution authorities had never made the aunt feel that she had a

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part in the children's future. She had a comfortable home of nine rooms in the suburbs. Around it was a large yard. It was supplied with a piano, telephone, and plenty of books. The aunt herself had been a teacher. As a result of our call, she took the three children to live with her.

Even in those cases where such arrangements were not, perhaps, possible at the time of application there was often such a change in the circumstances of their relatives that children could, after a while, go back to them. Of such opportunities the child-caring agencies should have been the first to know. There were many instances that showed the necessity for continuous knowledge of the families.

One typical record stated that certain children were "Homeless, to be placed. Mother dead." Following the clue offered by the address of the maternal grandparents the visitor found these latter comfortably housed and cherishing warm affection for the little grandchildren. Not only the grandparents, but many relatives, aunts, uncles, and cousins lived in the neighborhood. The mother had died of tuberculosis and although the grandparents had wished to keep the children they could not afford to do so at the time the children were put in the institution, as the father was out of work and could not then contribute toward their expenses. Inquiry revealed the fact that he had secured steady work as a stationary engineer; consequently the children were soon discharged to him and they all went to live with the delighted grandparents.

And again:

The institution told us of two boys who were absolutely homeless. It wanted to place them out on farms. From the meager institution record we learned that the parents had come to Pittsburgh from Baltimore. We immediately sent a letter to the Federated Charities of Baltimore, stating that the family of a group of institutional children had left the city in 1889, twenty years before, and that any information concerning it would be of use. A report from this society soon came stating that there were six branches of that family in Baltimore and giving in detail the reason why none of them was financially able, although morally suitable, to take the children and giving assurance that the agency would keep in touch with the situation. Three weeks later another letter was received saying that the visitor found conditions had changed, that one of the uncles had married a woman who loved children and wanted the boys. The home was comfortable and the people were of excellent character. The boys were sent to her.

We found that the breaking up of families often augmented by unnecessary separation of brothers and sisters, the sons being accepted by institutions receiving boys only, while the daughters were sent to institutions that received only girls. Even in co-educational asylums there was sometimes an undesirable division of interest between brothers and sisters. This was largely due to the sharp distinction made between the activities of boys and girls. For instance, one widower told us that he had selected a co-educational institution so that his children should not forget each other. He had been greatly disappointed because although they had lived in the same asylum for two years, they rarely met. Even when brothers or sisters were in the same division of an institution they were sometimes kept apart by the "system." A grandmother said that her little granddaughters who were in the same orphanage, did not see each other except when they were in chapel, because one was in the big girls' department and the other was in the little girls' department. Such instances as these did not occur in all the institutions, but we found them to be more common than was generally supposed.

The rules governing the visits of relatives to institution children, and the treatment accorded them on visiting days, had an important influence also in holding family interest intact. Of one institution where great sympathy had been shown her, a hardworking mother said, "They know how to help you up there and don't keep reminding you of the rules. When my little boy was sick with measles they let me come and stay with him every night." Another mother said, "On visiting days the managers and the matron talked a great deal to me about the training they wanted to give my little boy, and when he came out he was a manly little gentleman—just made over." But these were rare exceptions. The opportunities given to good relatives for contact with the children were usually inadequate to foster family unity as much as was desirable and possible. In many of the institutions Sunday was not a visiting day. Yet most wage-earning parents were obliged to lose valuable time unless they were allowed to see their children on Sunday. For example:

An industrious, big-hearted washwoman, after the death of her husband, placed her two little boys, aged four and six, in an orphanage.



They had been there two months when one of her patrons learned of the fact.

"Do you go often to see your little boys?" she asked the mother.

"No, I haven't been at all yet," was the answer. "You see there is just one visiting day and that's Thursday. They won't let you come on Sundays. The ladies say that the children go to church in the morning, and Sunday school in the afternoon, and what with keeping them dressed up and getting the meals through, they can't be bothered with having visitors around. Well, during the week it keeps me hustling to get that board money. You see Wednesday and Thursday I wash for Mrs. Weston. Those are her days and she can't very well change them. But even if she did I should have to wash on all the other days to get along."

It may seriously be asked which was of greater value in safeguarding the future welfare of these children; to have had Sunday school, church, dinner, and best clothes to the exclusion of a visit from such a mother as this one happened to be, or to have included her in the services of the institution and to have strengthened, instead of weakened, her sense of maternal responsibility.

If the institutions had possessed such knowledge of the families as would have enabled them to know which parents to encourage and which ones to keep away from their children and proceed against by law, such rules as the following could have been abolished. They were printed on a large placard and framed in the reception room of one of the foremost institutions of the District, although it was not one of the five especially studied.

#### *RULES*

1. Visitors may visit children Thursdays and Saturdays from 4 to 8 p. m.
2. Visitors must go promptly at the end of visiting hours.
3. Visitors are strictly prohibited from bringing eatables to the children.
4. Sabbath visiting is not allowed.
5. The Sunday papers **MUST NOT** be brought to the Home.
6. Visitors violating any of these rules may be prohibited from visiting the Home.

Certainly such an implied attitude toward the parents and relatives was not calculated to make them feel welcome and did not act as a deterrent to the abandonment of which we heard so much complaint from the managers in connection with child dependency. Visiting days at the institutions were excellent opportunities for educating the relatives and for winning their co-operation in helpful plans for the children's future. Such days should have been made attractive, and no stone left unturned to prepare the family for the child who was to be returned to it. Child hygiene should have been a topic of frequent discussion. And the formation of a fathers' and mothers' club was not impractical by way of suggestion.

The opportunities that were too few and far between for good parents to see their children were, however, ample for the preservation of perilous ties between unfit relatives and the children who should have been legally protected from them. The connection between children and homes which were found to be hopelessly unfit should have been severed. In the children's institutions, community and institution met face to face.

We discovered that the managers generally hoped that the children of parents of doubtful morality would automatically become institutional wards by virtue of the law which read:

"If the father or mother from drunkenness, profligacy, or other causes, shall have neglected or refused to provide for his or her child or children for the period of one year or upwards, proven to the court, with the consent of the non-neglecting father or mother alone, or if none, of the next friend of such child, or of the guardians or overseers of the poor or of such charitable institution as shall have supported such child for at least one year, the court may decree that such child shall assume the name of the adopting parents, and have all the rights of a child and heir," and so forth. (Pamphlet Laws of Pa., 1887, p. 125.)

While the act quoted gave authority only for adoption yet its purpose and effect had been construed by the courts to mean that the disposition of the child whose parents had abandoned him for more than twelve months, fell to anyone who had cared for him in the meantime. The right to give consent to the adoption of a child and to change his name would seem to include

all of the parental rights. It was common observation among the institutions that as the wage-earning age approached parents shrewdly averted the loss of a child who would be useful by a sudden show of interest or by paying money just often enough to control his career. Many parents, considered by superintendents or matrons to be unfit guardians, and to whom the institutions had not the slightest intention of returning their children, had nevertheless been allowed to come and see them every visiting day for years. This had a demoralizing effect upon the children and was not fair treatment to the fathers and mothers.

It would seem that the main point of keeping in institutions normal children whose parents were of doubtful morality, would be in order to give the institutions time to make careful investigations of the true state of affairs. If after investigation of these families the situation is found to be hopeful, no pains should be spared, nor time lost, in trying out possible remedies for the wrongs discovered. If, however, the investigation proves that the parent or parents are unfit, legal protection should be secured and the children placed in family homes. As it was, the institutions seldom took advantage of the interval to get at the root of a case, and usually seldom accumulated more information about the real character of families whose children had received several years of institutional care, than they had gotten at the time of application.

Strange to say, the institutions had not learned to use the juvenile court in Allegheny County, which in 1907 had been in operation for five years, although they constantly accepted children from it. The probation officers could find but one case in which an institution had petitioned the court for legal guardianship in order to protect children from unfit parents. The institution lost this case because it did not have enough evidence to support its claim and it had never given the juvenile court another trial.

Legal advice was also sometimes necessary for the mother or father if the interests of the child were to be safeguarded, to say nothing of helping the parents for their own sakes. As a social worker of large legal experience remarked: "It is quite as necessary to have every case which presents any need of



legal advice checked up by a socially minded lawyer as to have the health of incoming children passed upon by the institution physician." However, although lawyers were connected with the institutions they were rarely called upon for advice.

In spite of the fact that a large proportion of the families had been broken up by desertion, the institutions had taken no steps to combat this evil. Desertion had actually occurred in 79 out of our 275 families. In 51 families (18.5 per cent) it was the immediate cause of child dependency. This crime had direct bearing upon the very foundation of community life—the integrity of the home. No attempt had been made to solve the difficulties of these desertion cases by means of the laws designed to protect deserted parents and their children. A few of the wives had resorted to legal procedure, but without success. There had been no enforcement of the court orders served upon fathers requiring them to pay their wives certain weekly sums.

This deadlock was due to several causes. There were serious defects in the legal machinery in Allegheny County; the political situation hampered the proper serving of warrants and balked efforts to gain results at magistrates' hearings; and those in charge of children's institutions were either unaware of their powers and responsibilities, or were indifferent and pessimistic about bringing cases to trial. "Our board is composed entirely of *women*," said one manager while discussing this subject. "Moreover, we have no money to spend on unsuccessful lawsuits." Quick calculation will, however, prove beyond question that they had spent more for the maintenance of individual children in the institution than it would have cost to secure legal protection for them and perhaps for other members of their families as well. As a result of this stand, many a deserted wife whose children had been received into an institution had remained uninformed of legal rights which might have safeguarded her whole future happiness and that of her children.

Neither had the institutions taken steps toward securing legal advice for such cases as the following:

A father, earning from \$20 to \$25 a week, was placed under court order to pay \$5.00 a week alimony to the mother. Three years had

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passed and she had received nothing. Her little boy had spent these three years in an institution because the mother had not been able to support him outside.

The wife of one man, who was in the penitentiary for a serious crime, received a letter from the institution head stating that her husband's term would be up during the next month, and advising her to secure a divorce. The mother said she wished to be protected by the law but did not know how to go about it. The question of the mother's protection would necessarily affect the whole lives of the children yet the institution in whose charge they were had made no provision to this end and did not co-operate with or refer the woman to the agency that could have helped her.

An almost indefinite number of such cases could be cited from among the families touched by children's institutions. It was true that conditions in the Pittsburgh courts made it unlikely that action taken by the institution would have secured alimony for the wife or support for the families of deserting fathers. The unsatisfactory legal procedure of the courts needed attack, and to such a program the very difficulties of securing justice should have spurred the institutions. But everybody took these evils as a matter of course and there was at the time of our inquiry no movement on foot to remedy them.\*

## CONSERVATION OF FAMILY RESOURCES

It is important then to develop the active support of kindred, and on the other hand to break family ties if inherently menacing to the child. It is no less important to develop whatever economic resources the families possess in order that parents and children may be brought to self-dependence.

Not only was there no program of constructive work directed toward bettering the conditions of life and labor among the families with which these institutions came into contact, but such economic relations as the institutions had with the families tended in some cases to depress rather than to strengthen them.

Contrary to popular opinion, we found that there was quite as much danger that an institution which had not made thorough

\*A family desertion law, providing for the payment of the husband's earnings and a probation system was passed by the legislature of 1913. Act of the General Assembly, 1913. No. 330, Section 1.

investigation would impose upon the parents as there was that parents would impose upon the institution. Without clear understanding of the characters and histories of the parents, as well as knowledge of their income, managers could not make wise decisions about their resources and the rates which should be charged for the children's care and board. Occasionally we found parents who were in position to pay more than they did pay, but much oftener we found conscientious fathers and mothers pushed dangerously near the breaking point by being required to make even small payments out of their scanty wages.

Here is the case of a mother whom the managers would doubtless have been glad to help if they had known the facts. Her hope for a home to which the child might return needed conservation.

Mrs. Scott was an industrious woman and was wearing herself out with worry over her future. In the expectation of securing a position as domestic at a weekly wage of \$5.00 she had agreed to pay \$1.50 a week to the institution for her child's board. She found that she could earn but \$3.00 a week and could not keep up the full amount and save for the future at the same time. When asked why she did not let the managers know, she said she was afraid to ask for a reduction of the charge because she had overheard a manager say one visiting day to another mother who had asked for a temporary reduction that she "would have to stand by her original agreement."

In some instances, as has been said, managers ruled that children could not be taken out as long as board bills were in arrears.

One father, aged forty years, a sub-brakeman on a railroad, who earned \$80 a month when on full pay, was forced into debt by the long illness of his tuberculous wife. After her death he tried to keep his daughter and two little sons in the homes of relatives, but this was not satisfactory and he finally put them into an institution. He had been struggling to settle his debts and to keep up the payments for his children, although, because of the hard times, he had been on half pay. We found him boarding with a good motherly woman who was perfectly willing to take care of the children as well. The father hoped to have her do this as soon as he could pay his bill at the institution.



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In such a case as this it seemed as if the children's dependence upon charity might have been terminated, with profit to all concerned, if they had been discharged to their father at once. The waiving of his financial obligation to the institution was about the last suggestion which his pride would have allowed him to make.

We found institutional care being given to many children because their fathers or mothers were ill or impoverished from work that did not yield a living wage, or that was unhealthful, or both. Moreover, in some of these cases it was clear that if more lucrative or healthful employment had been secured for the parents their homes might have been built up in anticipation of the children's return to them. The chance of reuniting a family was sometimes increased, sometimes destroyed, by the kind of work which sympathetic institution managers provided.

A husband had failed to support his family and had then deserted. The managers had taken the children into the institution and had provided work for the wife. Such was the record when we found her, two years after the children's admission. She was in a very nervous and exhausted state, had a great deal of pain in her lungs, and was tuberculous. We learned that her mother and sister had both died of this disease. The position secured for her was that of a cleaner in an office building where she earned \$6.00 a week. She was obliged to dress in a dark cellar room of the building and to do wet cleaning. Her shoes were frequently soaked through for hours at a time. The oldest daughter was helping to support the family by wrapping candy at the wage of \$4.00 a week. This mother's efficiency had been fatally weakened by unhealthful, underpaid work.

Wage-earning mothers made, as a rule, from one-third to one-half as large an income as their husbands had earned. While the homes of the widows and deserted wives were often broken up because they could not afford the bare necessities of life, we found the widowers and the deserted husbands abandoning their homes because they had not the means to duplicate the services of the wives by hiring housekeepers—even if satisfactory ones could have been found. Some of the mothers had had practically no experience in managing household expenditures until they were suddenly confronted with the problems of desertion or widowhood.

We learned that in a number of families the husbands had done all the providing and buying, leaving the wives in ignorance of the distribution of the family funds. Consequently, when deprived of the wage-earner, they did not know how much money was required to keep up the family, nor how to purchase supplies in an economical way. The evils of the instalment plan, for example, were rampant in one of the homes which a working mother was attempting to re-establish. Yet their children were all that was left to these women and for those mothers who were suitable guardians, friendly guidance was essential for the safety of the children as well as for their own welfare.

Two children, a boy and a girl, had been in an institution for eight years. The father's health had been impaired by an insanitary home and the extremes of heat and cold in the mill in which he worked. He died of typhoid pneumonia. The mother, an industrious but ignorant woman, secured work for her two oldest daughters as domestics, and sent the other two to an asylum. She was extremely poor. The father had carried a thousand dollar life insurance policy, but had allowed it to lapse during a period of unemployment. He had also belonged to a loan association into which he had paid a good deal of money, but after his death some technical difficulty arose and the family received nothing. A place as domestic was secured for the mother, but hard work, coming after a period of great strain, broke her down completely, and she was supported out of the scanty wages of her two young daughters. The difficulty over the loan association and the breakdown of the mother were unknown to the institution authorities because they did not keep in touch with the families of their children. The experience of this woman is not an uncommon one.

Here was a case where not the income, but the character of occupation stood in the way of a united family:

Mrs. James was an intelligent, respectable woman of fine physique, whose husband, a professional man, had been killed in a railroad accident. She had put her little boy of six years into an institution and accepted a position as cook in a private family where she had remained for six years at a wage of \$9.00 a week. She belonged to a lodge and carried other insurance. She said her mistress would never consent to have the boy join her. She intended to board him at the institution for 50 cents a week until he was old enough to work. Long separation and freedom from responsibility for his care had developed an indifference to the child,

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but at the suggestion that she might change her position, take the boy home and give him a technical training, she became very much interested. She was the kind of woman for whom other work than that of domestic service could be easily secured.

Consider the fathers also:

A poor, struggling Slav laborer, who had been seven years in the steel district, was left, when his wife died, with three small sons and a little girl. He was steady, reliable, and earned \$1.75 per day, for five and one-half days a week in a mill. For ten months after the mother's death, he took care of the children, and did the housework with the help of a "wife" who did the washing. As matters were not going well, he tearfully placed them in an institution. At this time we asked the Associated Charities which had just been organized, to co-operate in securing more remunerative work for the father and to aid in placing the children in a home where he might also live. This organization interested a priest of the Slavic church in the case. He set about finding a family who had been brought up in the same class to which the man had belonged in the old country—a point which Americans would probably have overlooked, and which illustrated the value of this particular kind of co-operation.

Take the case of the father of six children, a pale, delicate, undersized widower. After the death of his wife, he placed four children with relatives and two in an institution. All those who knew him spoke of his grit and his keen sense of parental responsibility. He had worked fourteen years in a coal mine and had then gathered chimneys in a glass house, but he went back to the mine because there was more money for him there. When we found him he was working in a dangerous pit for eighteen hours a day with no definite time for lunch—"It is just a bite whenever you can get it." He had fallen once and hurt his head, being dizzy for weeks afterward. His arm was hurt at another time and later a finger was crushed, but he had not stopped for either of these injuries. He paid board for his children out of earnings that averaged \$15 and \$18 a week.

Should an institution have stood by and not have offered to help, preferably by co-operation with some agency equipped to undertake such work, in finding safe employment for such a father of six motherless little children?

Through all these instances it is overwhelmingly borne in



# PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

upon us that the institution can not fulfil its obligation toward the child as an individual human being without knowledge of the problems back of him. This responsibility is revealed with especial vividness at the time of discharge, when the boy or girl is returned to household and community. A review of the circumstances of the children discharged during the year of our inquiry threw light also on some of the results of institutional guardianship measured in terms of child welfare.

TABLE 13.—WHEREABOUTS, AT THE TIME OF THE INVESTIGATION, OF 208 CHILDREN DISCHARGED FROM INSTITUTIONS<sup>a</sup>

<i>Whereabouts of Children</i>	CHILDREN RE-SIDING AS SPECIFIED	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
With parents . . . . .	158	76.0
With relatives . . . . .	10	4.8
In foster homes . . . . .	20	9.6
In the care of other institutions or societies . . . . .	11	5.3
In boarding houses. . . . .	7	3.4
Dead. . . . .	2	.9
Total. . . . .	208	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Of the 232 children discharged from institutions during the year, 24 could not be found at the time of the investigation.

## HAZARDS OF DISCHARGED CHILDREN

MORAL HAZARDS. During the year of our inquiry, 232 of the 579 children studied were discharged; 158 of these went back to their own parents; 10 went to relatives; 20 were placed out in foster homes by the institutions; 11 were transferred to children's agencies other than those from which they had been discharged; seven went into boarding houses or working boys' homes; two had died; 24 could not be found. Thus 76 per cent of the discharged children who could be traced went to their own parents and their homes could be classified according to the method already employed.

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TABLE 14.—HOME INFLUENCES, PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES IN 140 FAMILIES IN WHICH CHILDREN WHO WERE DISCHARGED TO A PARENT OR PARENTS<sup>a</sup> WERE FOUND TO BE LIVING AT THE TIME OF THE INVESTIGATION

<i>Influences within Home</i>	FAMILIES, BY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES				ALL FAMILIES	
	<i>Envi- ron- ment Favor- able, Re- sources Ade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Favor- able, Re- sources Inade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Un- favor- able, Re- sources Ade- quate</i>	<i>Envi- ron- ment Un- favor- able, Re- sources Inade- quate</i>		
					Number	Per Cent
Class I Parents who were adjudged self-respecting, conscious of parental responsibility, and solicitous of the future good of their children . . . .	7	21	..	38	66	47.2
Class II Parents who were adjudged respectable but had habits or standards of living that would be detrimental to a child's welfare; whose standards because of weakness of character, inefficiency, or inability, did not tend to rise . . . .	..	10	1	32	43	30.7
Class III Parents who had habits or standards of living that would be a distinct menace to a child's welfare; who were of questionable character, immoral in conjugal relationships, lacking in parental responsibility, or mentally defective . . . .	..	1	2	28	31	22.1
Total . . . . .	7	32	3	98	140	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Of the 158 families of children discharged from institutions and found in the care of a parent or parents, eight could not be classified as to either home influences, environment, or resources, and four placed in Class II and six placed in Class III, according to home influences, could not be classified as to environment and resources.

Considering that the institutions had made no study of these people it was not surprising to find that more than half these homes belonged to families in Classes II and III; that 47 were adjudged respectable but had standards and habits detrimental to a child's welfare. In only seven homes were all the factors favorable for a child, while 37 were distinctly menacing to a child's mental and moral welfare. Emphasis has been laid upon the necessity for rehabilitating families, for the rejoining of normal ties whenever possible. Vigorous protest should be made, however, against the return of children to family groups unfitted or unequipped to care for them.

An instance of the need for thorough methods of securing information about questionable parents was found in the case of one little five-year-old girl who had been discharged to her drunken mother after two years in an institution.

When the visitor found her, she was playing on the floor while her mother, intoxicated, lay upon the couch. The house was filthy. This mere baby, who was getting her own dinner, naively remarked, "We all have whiskey but we don't all get drunk like our mother." The visitor learned that the family had been a menace to the neighborhood for years. The father had murdered some one and was in jail. An older sister, aged ten, still in the institution, was about to be returned to this home by the managers. Her board had been paid by another sister who earned \$2.50 a week as a domestic. This girl was in delicate health. A brother, aged seventeen, was helping to support the family.

Even a greater obligation held with respect to foster homes in which children were placed—homes having no claim whatever upon the boys and girls, but selected by the institutions to guide and mold the children entrusted to them. It was found to be common practice for the institutions, without securing legal record of transferred guardianship, to place in foster homes children whose parents were considered to be unsuitable guardians. Such methods made it largely a matter of luck as to whether the results were beneficial or bad.

When she was ten years old, Emily, with two younger sisters and a younger brother, was admitted to an institution. Another children's agency had temporarily cared for them, but its records were not available



to us. The second institution knew that the mother was immoral and that she had deserted her husband and children; that the father, in despair, had sent the children to the institution and had then gone West. He had contributed toward their support for one year, but after that the payments had stopped and all trace of him was lost. The institution said that the mother had written to the children from California, but that it had not been thought best to let them see her letters.

Emily had been kept at the institution nearly four years and had then been placed with a family living upon the outskirts of Pittsburgh. Ten and a half months after this placement the institution asked us for a report upon the foster home because Emily, then nearly sixteen, had just written the matron a letter in which she mentioned that the foster father kept a saloon. The institution had not known this and feared that the girl was not safe.

A study of the situation confirmed these fears. The reputation of the family was most unsatisfactory. Shortly before our visits, the foster father had twice been refused licenses because he had been guilty of selling liquor to minors. On the other hand we discovered that Emily had many well-to-do relatives. She proved to be a girl of unusual force and personality. Her school record showed that she possessed marked ability and her greatest desire was to study medicine or law. She had a warm personal friendship for her teacher and loved good literature. The foster parents were illiterate. Emily had made herself invaluable to them by carrying on the family correspondence and by keeping the books. She also did much of the housework and cared for the babies.

After learning these facts and being told also that Emily would pass out of the jurisdiction of the juvenile court upon her sixteenth birthday, the institution was desirous of rescuing Emily from her dangerous position, but the foster parents refused to give her up. The relatives were taken into consultation and the institution, disliking the publicity of petitioning the juvenile court for the custody of the girl, hoped to persuade the relatives to take this step. They had done a great deal for the children both before and after the family had been broken up, but had been unable to provide for them at the time application was made for institutional care. They had visited the children until the authorities, assuming that they were probably as bad as the mother, refused to let them come any more on the ground that they did not contribute toward the board bill. They had been told also that Emily was placed out but her address had been refused them. Naturally such treatment was resented, but they did not protest because they supposed that the father, who was said to be steady and affectionate, was managing the children's welfare.

They now agreed to help the institution save Emily, offering her a permanent home and an opportunity to secure a higher education. Meanwhile the institution made ineffectual attempts to persuade the foster father to let the girl go to them, but he quietly went before the orphan's court and forced her to select him as her guardian—a right which she possessed because she had become fourteen years of age. The relatives were therefore notified that this had been accomplished. The girl had been eager to go to her relatives but the foster parents had reminded her of their past neglect and the institution had lost its hold upon her affections by keeping from her the letters from her mother, by placing her with unknown people, and by neglecting to visit her afterward. The lawyer connected with the institution did not advise habeas-corpus proceedings unless positive evidence could be secured showing maltreatment by the foster parents. Such evidence was not forthcoming. A year afterward the girl was still with the saloon keeper and his guardianship had not been legally tested.

This case is not cited as being entirely typical; it was extreme. It presented, in sharp outline, the connection between institutional policies and child welfare. Had an initial investigation of the family been made and recorded, it was entirely possible that the dependency of these children might have been altogether avoided; if the investigation had proved that the mother was unsuitable but that the father was as industrious and affectionate as we were told he was, legal steps could easily have been taken to protect the children from the mother and possibly the father could have boarded them with relatives. But if investigation had proved both parents to be unfit guardians, legal custody could have been secured either by the relatives or, if necessary, by the institution and the children placed out in family homes. Or, even if none of these measures had been taken at the time application was made for institutional care, at least part of this tragedy would have been avoided if pains had been taken to investigate the foster home or to supervise the girl's life after placement. Or, in the absence of all these measures, some degree of restitution might have been made if the institution had responded quickly to the need for legal action, as shown by the investigation, before the girl became sixteen years old.

It seems unnecessary to point out here the urgent necessity

for the supervision of children who are placed out in foster homes among strangers who do not know their temperaments and habits. Even when children are placed with families wellknown to the institution authorities, there should be positive and continuous information about the status of the child in the home.

An efficient manager, who had successfully placed out many institution children, spoke of the difficulties she had in safeguarding them. "You can't be safe in depending upon the references nor upon what the child tells you," she said. "I have just removed one of our girls from a private home in which we had the greatest confidence. She reported that she liked the place. One day, when talking with another girl who had to milk four cows, our girl said, 'Oh that's nothing, I have to milk eight.' We heard of this and brought her back. We find that she has spinal trouble and the work was making it worse."

One day in going through the county jail the writer's attention was directed to Walter Paterson, fifteen years old, who had been arrested for stealing and who, because the detention rooms for children were full, was confined in an ordinary cell. A talk with this boy, and subsequent verification of his story, revealed the following facts:

He had been discharged from a children's institution two years before his arrest. He knew nothing of his father but remembered his mother who had died when he was nine. He spoke of having been well treated at the institution. One night a business man had called and Walter was given to him. He took the boy away with him that very evening. This man had made no previous application for a child, but was known by the managers for his high business standing. He lived in a neighboring town. He and his wife had no children of their own and they received Walter as though he had been their son. After school hours Walter helped about the house and cared for the horse. One day he ran away because his foster father punished him severely. He was caught and brought back without the institution authorities knowing anything of the episode. The attitude of the foster parents changed; the boy was forced to eat by himself in the kitchen, did most of the housework, and was given no new clothes; he was, however, sent to school even after his fourteenth birthday. The extreme cheapness of his worn out clothes made him a laughing stock to the village boys. In the two years he lived with this family he received spending money



only twice, and was so miserable that he had made up his mind to run so far away that his foster parents could not catch him again. He stole \$6.00, came to Pittsburgh, and was arrested. When asked why he did not tell the asylum people about his troubles he said that they had never been to see him, had not written to him, and he thought they must have been glad to get rid of him. He said he did not believe he had any friends anywhere.

It will be noted that this home and the boy seemed to be well suited to each other, from all that we could learn about the case, until after the boy had been there a year. One or two visits to the child, immediately after this placement, would not have constituted adequate supervision for him. In this, as in other cases, what was needed was a friendly, continuous knowledge of the situation for an indefinite length of time.

**CHILD LABOR.** What steps did the institutions take to protect from premature employment children discharged before the legal working age? The so-called working age—formerly twelve, now fourteen—is nothing more than a legal minimum; not a standard which a philanthropic organization should accept. Even the discharged children over working age needed help and guidance and should have been kept under inspection to see that their employment was not stunting. In the absence of any system of supervision, we found that, because of poverty or because of pressure brought to bear by ignorant or grasping parents or foster parents, some of the under-age children were illegally at work. The institution authorities had not yet felt the close connection between their work and the campaign against child labor.

Willie, aged twelve years, climbed over the institution fence and ran back to his mother, concerning whom there was no information upon the records. At the suggestion of a half brother who was foreman in a steel mill, she promptly secured work for him by signing a false affidavit. We found him a year later working in this mill at a wage of \$4.80 a week. This money he paid to his mother, who was a laundress by the day. She told us that she was intending to take her little girl, at that time eleven years old, out of the institution very soon and find work for her in a cheap store as cash girl. She knew other little girls who had secured such positions, and thought Charlotte could do as well as they.

One family to which a boy was to be returned had planned to put him in a glass factory before he reached the legal age. The mother said that a great many under-age boys were at work in this place, and that when the inspector came around they ran and hid in the barrels and boxes upon which the bosses immediately sat down. In defense of her plan she remarked, "When children begin to work in a factory they like it so much that you cannot get them out." This family was composed of church members in good standing.

Another instance was that of a mother who said that she expected to take her three children out of the asylum as soon as she could get working papers for them. They were extremely promising children and she was asked if she would be willing to continue their education after they were fourteen years old, if she were helped to do it. This suggestion did not meet her approval. She said she herself had gone into domestic service at the age of eleven, and she wished her children to work as soon as possible, although she did not know of anything but a candy factory for the girls and a glass factory for the boys. She knew that boys sometimes worked all night in this glass factory but said that her boy would have to do this if he were asked to; she could see no way out of it.

In contrast to this, the next parent interviewed said that she had had to go to work when under twelve but she did not intend to give her children a similar experience. Her desire was to have them go through high school and finish their education in some technical institution.

Not only was thorough supervision needed for its negative influence in keeping the discharged children from ill treatment and premature labor, but it was needed as a positive and aggressive force to promote their chances in life. As the result of efforts to enlist their co-operation, many employers became much interested in their young workers and gave them opportunities to advance. One employer confided to our visitor that he was afraid William was tuberculous and wanted to know how he could get him to a dispensary for a diagnosis. The visitor promptly had the boy examined. He was found to be in a dangerous condition and in

urgent need of preventive care. His employer gladly helped him back to health.

### PHYSICAL JEOPARDY

This last case brings us to the consideration of still another phase of responsibility for child life in the average institution. We found that these asylums had no human balance sheets which would show the success or failure of their work as measured in the child's development, either physical or mental; nor could we, from our inquiries into the families, gather data for such a tabulation. Yet without such records it was impossible to do justice to the institutions themselves, and trace the tragedy back of each child. For example, it is not entirely fair to judge the work done by an institution by average results attained. The uneven quality of the children who come into its keeping must be borne in mind. Here were 10 institution children twelve years old who were only in the fourth grade when placed out—behind most other children of the same age. But when it was learned that these children could neither read nor write when they came to the institution at the ages of eight, nine, and ten, we recognized that the fourth grade showed marked progress as the result of the work done there. A similar example was that of a child who seemed to the visitor to have serious eye trouble and who constantly readjusted her spectacles. Inquiry revealed that, instead of being a neglected case, the girl had had several operations and was wearing spectacles to cure severe muscular difficulties. Compared to her condition when she came to the institution she was making excellent progress.

Where infirmary records existed entry had been made in cases of acute illness, but there was nothing to show the actual physical condition of the children. This was due to the fact that the so-called medical examination at the time of admission had usually been a mere physical inspection, undertaken not with a view to discovering the needs of the children but to determine whether or not they had any communicable diseases or were likely to require special physical care. Neither were there such other examinations from time to time as would keep the institutions informed of the children's gain or loss. Striking cases of



discharged boys or girls who had forged ahead, and who were physically and mentally the peers of their fellows in the outer world were often cited; and the countless acts of kindness, personal training, and encouragement on the part of individual managers, matrons, and teachers toward the little children with whom they come in contact, have not been lightly disregarded. Yet, taking all these points into consideration, there was no evidence of any systematic plan of physical and mental nurture which would insure adequate opportunities for growth and culture to all the boys and girls passing through the institutions. And there were far more numerous cases indicating an absence of modern prophylactic measures to test and to safeguard the physical condition of the children in the great majority of the institutions. Remediable defects which did not seriously interfere with a child's apparent health while he was in the institution, sometimes caused serious complications later on.

No one had shouldered the responsibility of safeguarding the health of four little brothers and sisters who had been discharged from an institution. One had been placed out and his family had lost trace of him. Another had been in the pest house twice, in a day nursery, in an institution for boys, in a children's fresh air home, and then for a year in another institution. These children were not strong, yet three of them had been sent back, without any supervision, to their ignorant mother, eight of whose other children had died, six of them under one year of age. She was unable to tell us the causes of their deaths because she said, "It is hard to keep so much in your head."

A little boy, discharged to his mother after two years of institutional care, was recorded as "pretty well" when he left. It was necessary, however, for his mother to take him immediately to a hospital where an operation was performed for tubercular glands of the neck. He was found to be so generally diseased that when last heard from he was not expected to live. The physician in charge stated as his opinion that this disease would have been curable if treated at an earlier stage.

Harold was a discharged boy, fifteen years old, who had difficulty in keeping his position because of severe pains in his eyes. The trouble had come on while he was in the institution. During his four years there he had spent a great deal of time studying and reading by poor gas light. He was discharged without having had his vision tested. His great desire was to be a jeweler. He was on the point of giving up this ambition

because he thought his eyes would not bear the strain. When we sent him to an oculist he had been spending his evenings in the street with a gang, because he could not use his eyes.

Another little boy, who had spent several years in an institution, was discharged because he was, according to the matron, "deaf, careless about his lessons, and incorrigible." Later he came before the juvenile court for truancy, and was found to be so handicapped by adenoids and eye strain that he could not study. Adenoids and eye strain called for treatment, not for the dunce's cap.

Charles had spent four years in an institution when the authorities asked us to find out whether or not he ought to be returned to his relatives. These people were found to be of excellent character. Their resources were, however, inadequate, and the only home to which the boy could go was that of the maternal grandmother, who was willing to take him and to whom the institution wished him sent. Our inquiry showed that the boy's mother had died of tuberculosis. His father, who had been a skilled workman in a steel mill where there was much dust, had died of the same disease. Further than that, the grandmother said that her own husband and four of their sons, as well as six of her brothers and sisters and two of the boy's uncles and one aunt on the other side of the family had met death from this cause. In addition we discovered that three sisters of the paternal grandfather had died from it. Altogether we recorded 28 deaths from tuberculosis in this one family. The only health record we could secure at the institution in regard to the boy was that he had had pneumonia. Needless to say, the house in which the grandmother lived and where a number of these deaths had occurred, was immediately reported to the board of health. We also urged the institution to persuade the grandmother to move before taking the child, and to see that she was instructed as to the best means of preventing disease; also to keep strict supervision of the boy whatever program was adopted for him.

Without special inquiry and search by an experienced worker this family history would never have become known to the institution managers.

#### THE MENACE IN LOW MENTALITY

So far as mental development was concerned, we endeavored to learn what school grades the children had reached before they entered and what grades they were in at the time they left the institution; whether or not school attendance had been regular; what had been their records; whether or not manual training or

domestic science had been taught them. In attempting to answer even such simple questions as these we were, however, altogether baffled.

In the first place, the institutions had taken no note of the children's school grades at the time of admission. We were obliged to ask the children themselves for the names of the schools they had previously attended. The whole inquiry was rendered unsatisfactory because some had come from ungraded public schools which did not keep systematic records, and some of the principals of schools that did keep records explained that it was impossible to trace pupils unless they knew in which grades they had been enrolled.

Even in institutions which maintained their own schools we frequently failed to learn what progress a child had made because no one knew what grade he was in when he had entered. A few of the teachers were able to give explicit information, but of 1,000 children for whose school records we searched, we secured data for but 420. A comparison of the grade records of these children with the records of all the children in the Pittsburgh schools (United States School Census, 1908), showed that these particular institutional children were, on an average, from one-half to one and a half grades behind the average—itself a low one.\* This showing did not justify a conclusion that the children in the institutions were especially dull or that they were subnormal. While mental and physical defects no doubt explained the retardation in some cases, in many it could be accounted for by absence or interruption in the children's school courses—interruptions due to the sad accidents in their little lives. Without knowing their mentality no further observations were possible.

Naturally since mentality tests and records had not become part of institutional work much training was found to have been wasted upon children who lacked the capacity to profit by it and who were in need of special care which they had not received. There was significance in the following case where delay in securing a diagnosis was expensive not only for the institution, but for the child himself.

\* See North, Lila Ver Planck: Pittsburgh Schools. P. 215 of this volume.



A feeble-minded mother and her four illegitimate children were admitted to the city poorhouse. She was sent to the insane department, and three of the children were placed out by the superintendent. The fourth, a little boy, was illegally kept in the poorhouse for five or six years and was then taken by a children's agency, which placed him out in one home after another. He stayed in each place about a year but was never satisfactory. Finally he was admitted to a Pittsburgh institution which kept him four months. The authorities of this institution stated that, while he was bright in some ways, he was dull in others and did not make normal progress. He was finally transferred to the state institution for the feeble-minded. The superintendent of this institution wrote us as follows: "This child is in good health and is what we classify as a middle-grade imbecile. Special care and training are required to develop him at all. As the best age for beginning this training is from six to eight years, the chances of improvement would have been better had training begun at that time."

This same children's institution had cared for the eight-year-old illegitimate son of a feeble-minded mother for three years. The institution physician stated that he "would be a case for the institution for the feeble-minded some day." Why would it not have been kindest to him and to his playmates as well as economical and scientific to have placed him in the proper institution at once?

There was still another case of an institutional ward which indicated how the neglect to examine a child whose mother was defective before him, precipitated needless burdens upon a large group of busy and charitable people—the county authorities, two children's agencies, and the families to whom he was sent, as well as upon the little fellow himself, who was surely not the one to be considered last.

Tom was club-footed, and his institutional presence was ingenuously explained in the records as having been due to "No home and a need of training." At the death of his mother he and his older brother had been put into an institution where they stayed for five years, until their father's second marriage. The boys were then taken home for fourteen months. Tom was sent to school and to Sunday school, but was "incorrigible," and his stepmother could do nothing with him. Upon studying him, we learned that as a baby he had undergone two operations in a hospital, for double club-foot. These were unsuccessful because proper after-care had

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not been given. Later he underwent a third operation. The surgeon who performed the last operation stated to us that if the child had received suitable medical attention immediately after birth his feet could have been made normal. As the surgeon was a specialist he had made no general physical examination of the boy, and while he knew he had been a troublesome patient, he was surprised later on to hear that feeble-mindedness was suspected.

Tom's father injured his back in a trade accident and then began to drink and to work irregularly because of the pain. The family became so poor that when Tom had typhoid fever the stepmother sold her watch and some other articles in order to pay expenses. As the family could not care for him after this illness, he was for a second time entered at the institution. Here he remained until he was thirteen. So troublesome was he that the matron threatened to resign if the boy was not taken out.

After a good deal of discussion upon the part of the managers he was transferred to a third institution where most of the children were older. Here he stayed but two weeks because the clatter of his braces disturbed the other boys.

Once more he was transferred; this time to an institution in the country where it was hoped that he would "learn a trade." In six months, he was, however, placed out with a Polish family who lived in a shanty on a farm. The people were new in the neighborhood. There were no English books and the boy could not understand what they said. He was not allowed to go to church and had no friends; neither was he paid any wages. He was returned two weeks later because one member of the family, who had been away, came back and he was no longer needed. Then he was placed with a second family, where he was treated like a hired man. He slept in a coal shed, worked off and on from six in the morning until nine at night every day, mowing the lawn and attending to the horses and cows. He had no friends and did not go to church. He had no spending money for a year. One day his brother came to see him and said he would not stay in a place like that and have no money. As a result the boy limped home, a distance of some twenty miles.

At the time of our inquiry, the last institution that had cared for him, following this incident, said it had heard that he was doing extremely well, living at home and supporting himself. What had happened was that on his return home, the stepmother had tried to have him sell papers. He would start out, sell about 4 cents' worth and come back thinking he had been earning his living. He had no idea of the value of money, no judgment. It was true that later he worked in a box factory for \$3.50 a week. The foreman at the factory stated that he did not know

much about the family nor the boy's home conditions, but that the step-mother came to him with such a pitiful story that he took the lad in. He found him obedient, steady, and careful, but unable to remember directions, and there was only one sort of work he could do. He took boards, cut by a saw, from one table to another. He was the butt of ridicule for the other boys in the factory. They once asked him to cut a board one foot long into a board two feet long and he seriously attempted the task. The foreman stated that it was hard for the boy to stand all day upon his crippled feet; he tried to save him all he could. At the time of the inquiry the boy was causing some annoyance to the girls in the neighborhood and was staying out late at night on the streets. Our visitor took the boy to the same surgeon who had formerly treated him at the hospital, and who stated that, considering that no treatment had been received since the last operation, the feet were in good condition. His opinion was that walking or standing on a flat surface would not be injurious to them but that working upon rough surfaces, such as plowing in the fields or doing general farm work, would be harmful, as the muscles were not strong enough to stand it. This threw a flood of light upon much of the boy's discomfort at the farms where he had been placed. We next had him examined by an alienist, who pronounced him a high grade imbecile.

To sum up then: Here was a boy of sixteen, feeble-minded, with crippled feet, who had been in four institutions for children, in a parochial school, in the Sunday schools of the city, in a hospital for a number of weeks, and in two family homes, who daily was becoming more dangerous to the community and yet who had received no effective treatment or control.

What might not initial investigation and mental examination have accomplished for the following case which, upon the surface, appeared to be one of "simple dependency"?

A boy, thirteen years of age, was admitted to an institution as "homeless." The brief record stated that he was a whole orphan having one sister, and that \$10 a month was received for board and \$2.00 a month for clothes. The source of this income was not stated. He was kept in the institution for two years until he was fifteen, and was then "placed with a florist." Our visitor found a paternal aunt living in a large stone house in an expensive neighborhood. The house was "elegantly furnished and the aunt was a woman of refinement and culture," who received the visitor graciously. She stated that the children's mother "had never been bright" and had not been adequately supported by her hus-



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band who was a drunkard and an outcast. His, also the aunt's, family had taken care of the wife at different times but she frequently went away and joined her husband. Finally he disappeared and nothing had been heard of him since. The mother had died of tuberculosis. Both of the children were mentally defective. The aunt said it was this fact that had made it impossible for her to receive them after the death of the grandmother who had previously taken them in. The boy was therefore entered at a Protestant institution for children and the little girl was sent to a Catholic boarding school. It was an uncle who had taken him out of the institution and who had secured the home and the work for him with the florist. The girl was still at the boarding school. Both the institutions had reported to us that the children were below a normal mental standard, that they acted about five years younger than they really were, and wanted to play with little children because they were unable to understand those of their own age.

Our inquiry failed to reveal that either of these children had ever received a physical or mental examination. The well-to-do relatives were treating these two defectives, children of defectives, as if they were merely stupid, and exploiting these institutions for normal children as custodial asylums, without on the other hand securing for them such care as would protect them from unfair competition with normal boys and girls and would prevent them from handing on their blight to children of their own later on.

Here was a similar menace:

Overseers of the poor of a certain county came into the possession of a feeble-minded father and mother and their five children. They sent the parents to the state institution for the feeble-minded, placed out a boy and a girl, and put the others into a children's institution. Ultimately all of these children were placed out in different homes. We found that one of the boys ran away from his foster home "because he was lonesome for his brothers." The foster parents reported this to the institution but no thorough search was ever made for him. The matron said "He swore and we didn't want him back." We could not find the girl until, after much searching of records, the overseers of the poor directed us to another agency to which they had once referred her. We finally learned that she was well off and had just married. The young husband was of course ignorant of the taint which would, in all probability, in the future wreck his family, as it had already wrecked that of his wife. The institution here took hazards unto the third and fourth generation.

## RECAPITULATION

These children whom we studied had been admitted to institutions, not because they were themselves in need of institutional treatment—they were supposedly normal in mind and body—but because their natural guardians had been unfortunate. Too often they had been preserved in lonesome isolation while their families went down.

The study showed that nearly half of the families continued to maintain homes after the children had gone into the institutions and that 47 per cent of these homes were respectable and the families solicitous for the future good of the children; 32 per cent of the families not maintaining homes, but who were found at the time of the inquiry, were also of good standing. More than half of the others were what may be called borderline cases—badly in need of help. The institutions had one and the same treatment to offer for their wide diversity of need—need of well thought out remedial and constructive work for the families, to encourage unity and parental responsibility; need of knowledge of the changing conditions within the household group; need of study of the special requirements of the individual children and the promotion of their welfare—on into the future.

The initial human responsibility for wise guidance of the families had rested, in the majority of instances, with the institutional authorities. The common conception of the children's institution, as held by the applicants, was that of a cross between a boarding house and a school—a more aristocratic form of relief than coal, tea, and clothing. They were, therefore, less reluctant to make their wants known to the institutions than to appeal to a relief society. The histories we gathered show that these families had applied for care for their children without knowing any more of their own true needs than a dispensary patient knows of the treatment best suited to his ills. We have seen that it was as dangerous to grant institutional care to a child merely because the applicant requested it, as it would be to allow a patient to make a diagnosis of his own condition and to prescribe for it. Every time an institution had allowed a family to break up or sink, without seeing that intelligent effort was made to save it (if it were not already too late), and

every time it had returned a child to a home that was unfit, it had strengthened the forces that had created the application. Every time it had placed out a child without adequate home study of the family to which he went and without adequately supervising him after placement, it had run the risk of canceling all its previous efforts to help him. Many of the children were like dropped stitches in a knitted garment, and the whole family was likely to unravel unless the trouble was caught up at the start. It was often a children's institution which received the first hint of a situation which, if unheeded, later on involved several households.

#### IV

#### THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTION AND THE COMMUNITY

One cause of failure on the part of institutional managers to push remedial and constructive measures was found in a widespread pessimism about helping the parents. Belief was current that families applying for help had usually brought their misfortunes upon themselves and that institutional care was the most helpful and humane way of saving the children.

As a contributor phrased it, "You will have to make human nature over, if you expect to check child dependency."

To some extent this is doubtless true, but it is also true that while there have always been children dependent upon charity, the causes that have made them dependent have varied and shifted with the fundamental changes which have been going on in the life of the people,—with the development of cities and industrial operations, entailing new hazards to life and limb, and putting new exactions upon human endurance and upon family life. With the development of sanitary science and social work an increasing number of the causes of child dependency today are seen to be preventable causes. For instance, we find orphanages established to care solely for children bereft of their parents by certain specified calamities, such as yellow fever—a disease which no longer produces child dependency in our states—and the elimination of typhoid fever and tuberculosis will do away with dependency now caused by those particular factors.



Each community must seek out for itself the particular forces which are endangering and bringing into needless dependency the children within its own borders. Imbedded in the antecedents of the families we studied were the acute and chronic problems of community life in the Pittsburgh District in seemingly endless variations and combinations. No one would have proposed that these institutions should equip themselves to meet all the social problems that came to their doors even though they added trained social workers to their regular staffs. But they could have stood ready to co-operate with other agencies and forces, both public and private, in their districts, in combating the preventable evils which swept away the natural supporters of many of their children. In addition, by massing stores of social information they could have become a means for self-revelation to the community in ways that would promote measures for bettering the conditions of life and labor.

At the time of this study there was, as has been stated, a daily population of some 3,000 supposedly normal boys and girls in the children's institutions of the Pittsburgh District. Yet in spite of accommodations for this large number, new institutions were being planned and old ones were being enlarged. And when we asked from whom came the demand for more, and still more institutional provision for normal children, we found the answer in the applications of those in misery who often did not understand the situations in which they were placed. Were their dependent children signals of preventable community distress, or were they merely the results of those historic combinations of inefficiency, poverty, and vice which many persons still claim to be the wholesale cause of child dependency?

Everyone knew that the District was staggering under many needless burdens, such as endemic typhoid fever and tuberculosis; that an uncounted number of its wage-earners were incapacitated through uncompensated industrial diseases and accidents; that the community as a whole was experiencing the results of insanitary living conditions and overwork of large numbers of its wage-earners; that there were bad hitches in the courts before which many of the cases of wage-earners were brought; and that public and private funds were

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seriously taxed because of the absence of co-ordination between the agencies handling the problems of the poor. How many children in the institutions of Allegheny were dependent upon charity because of bad municipal and industrial conditions?

Said a Pittsburgh health official, "If the children's institutions could tell us how much of the dependency they treat is caused by typhoid fever, it would be of use to us in our fight for clean water." Said a member of the Pittsburgh bar, "If the children's institutions could discover specific instances of defects in the laws of procedure in desertion and non-support cases, we should be able to see the situation more clearly and to remedy it." Said a wealthy contributor to children's charities, "I wish we knew more about our children so that we could tell what results we are getting from the work." Our case study of 275 families carried us a little way into the heart of the problem.

We turn, by way of illustration, to the simplest of the groups of preventable causes—deaths or injuries due to conditions of work. In the 275 families there were 72 cases of this kind, of which 71 are classified in Table 15. The result of one was unknown.

The occupations in which the accidents occurred were representative of the industries of the District, and may be summed up in a group composed of mills and machine shops, coal mines,

TABLE 15.—RESULTS OF TRADE ACCIDENTS AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES TO 68 FATHERS AND 3 MOTHERS IN 70 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS<sup>a</sup>

<i>Effect of Trade Accident or Occupational Disease</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>
Death . . . . .	25	..
Permanent injury resulting in		
Total disability . . . . .	2	..
Permanent inconvenience not amounting to total disability . . . . .	8	3
Permanent injury to hand not amounting to disability . . . . .	8	..
Temporary injury . . . . .	25	..
Total . . . . .	68	3

<sup>a</sup> In one family both father and mother were affected.

railroads, bakeries, building trades, miscellaneous factories, telephone and telegraph companies. Most parents in this table were in the prime of life at the time their children became dependent.

We now arrive at the question of how large a factor these accidents and diseases were in the dependency of the children involved in the 71 families under discussion. In attempting to settle this question we came, of necessity, against certain borderline cases in which so many destructive factors had entered that one could not tell just what part in the downfall the trade history had played. In 18 of the 71 families who had suffered from trade accidents and trade diseases, it did not appear that the accidents or diseases had had any close connection with the forces which had precipitated the children into the institutions. In 30 families accidents and diseases were found to have been factors in the child's dependency, but family troubles, lack of thrift, and other human waywardnesses had so complicated the situation that one was not justified in stating that dependency was actually due to trade causes. In 23 families, however, it appeared to have been due chiefly, if not wholly, to such causes. These 23 families included 59 children. We found, therefore, that out of the total 579 children covered by our small investigation, the dependency of 10 per cent was definitely traceable to trade accidents and trade diseases.

It is fair to suppose that some of these families would have failed to hold their own without the complication of trade diseases. Seventeen of the 69 fathers had an earning capacity of \$15 or under. We may, therefore, regard these families as having been chronically on the borderline between independence and dependency. But it is significant that 37 fathers had an earning capacity of from \$15 to \$33 per week. In 15 cases the earning capacity could not be learned but there were no indications that it was unusually low. With reference to these trade accident cases we found that 43 of the 69 fathers had at some time during their lives been connected with protective societies, that 22 had not been so protected, and for four data were not obtainable. So far as we were able to discover only eight of the families whose breadwinners were killed had received any compensation whatever from their employers.



The sudden loss of the wage-earner had sometimes produced such confusion and shock among the survivors that they could not always definitely recall what had occurred during the first days after the accident. Some of the mothers seemed like rudderless ships, floating on a sea of chance, and many of them showed, above all else, a need for understanding friendship and experienced direction. They had looked upon the institutions as isles of safety at least for their children, but no one had protected the mothers themselves.

There were 75 children in whose dependency industrial causes had been leading factors and they had spent an aggregate number of 208 years in the institutions—something over two centuries of time! The approximate cost of their care was \$25,000, paid from institution funds. In other words, we actually found that an average of \$818 had been spent upon each of the families, in the form of institutional life for their little children, without the expenditure of one penny toward the preservation of the family home and without any effort to secure recompense to the families from the industries which had produced this human waste.

A well-to-do owner of a factory in which accidents were frequent said, "I do not think the wives of our men who are killed feel the need of greater compensation. The people of the town are very kind and there are societies that take the children. This gives the wife a chance to rest up, to work, to regain the freedom of her youth, and it gives the children better training than they would have at home." Such a story reflects the attitude of a large group of unimaginative but sympathetic and charitably inclined people who have not yet realized that the children's institutions, especially those in our industrial districts, are being used as a form of compensation for industrial injury, and who have placed this additional burden upon public and private contributors.

Suppose we take a few cases to illustrate what had actually happened to some of our family groups when institutional care was given children dependent as a direct result of trade accidents or trade diseases. Consider, for instance, the case of four children who had received eight years of institutional care at a cost of \$1,000. They were entered on the records as "deserted by father."

A study of the case shows that the father, Robert Alden, bright and industrious, began work at the age of twelve. He became a steam hammerman in the Pittsburgh mill, and thriftily supported his wife and four children until he had a trade accident, in which he lost one eye and was otherwise generally injured. The company sent him to a hospital, where an effort was made to save the other eye. He was out of the shop about four months after this accident, and when he went back his wages were reduced from \$2.50 to \$2.00 per day, because of his infirmity. He was given no recognition on an accident claim. The men in his shop were very sympathetic and took up a collection for him. As time went on he seemed to lose courage and, although advised to sue the company, he did not do so because he was pessimistic about winning the case. This accident occurred in 1901, and Mrs. Alden said he was never the same afterwards. His mind became affected, he began to drink heavily, was irritable at home, and worked irregularly. His wife had to take in washing to help support the family. He finally left Pittsburgh for West Virginia and after a time his family joined him. He soon had another trade accident in which he nearly lost his hand, and was again laid up. After this he went to another city where an arm was broken while he was working in a machine shop, and he was laid up for three months. The company gave him no help, but the men chipped in every pay day and supplied his wife with money. This would not have tided them over had she not long before saved \$35 out of the money her husband had given her with which to buy wood. Instead of buying it she had gathered it along railroad tracks, without her husband's knowledge.

The next accident occurred in another tool shop; Mr. Alden's right leg was broken in two places by some metal that fell on him from a nearby pile, and practically buried him. His injuries were so serious as to keep him out of work for five months. His wife supported the family by keeping boarders. His fellow workers made up one collection at this time, but the company did nothing. Mrs. Alden said she became so discouraged with all these disasters and her husband's increasingly bad temper, that she told him to leave and she would take care of the four children. Mr. Alden went to Oklahoma, where he became hammer driver and blacksmith, earning good wages, but he did not send any money home.

Mrs. Alden then gave up boarders and went out by the day, working for a glass company. Here the end of one index finger was taken off on a press. Being a very plucky woman she missed only a few days' work, but her hand troubled her for about a year, as the bone had been seriously injured. She was then given work at a machine which could be operated with one hand, was paid by the piece, but was able to make only

\$1.00 a day with the one hand, while she had previously made \$1.80 with two. Soon after this some new machinery was introduced which made it impossible for her to earn even a dollar a day and she had to stop. While operating the one-hand machine, she was obliged to stand with her weight on one foot, and one side became so strained that she had to give up for awhile. She put the children into an institution and went to her mother's home to rest. Here the institution could have saved the day, but it failed to see its opportunity. The mother afterwards went to work again in a pickle factory for \$1.25 a day, but out of this she had to buy her own caps and uniforms, and pay for a locker in which to keep her clothes. This did not leave her enough to live upon, and she was obliged to give up her position. She then worked for an electric company, which soon failed, and she was unable to collect her wages. After another discouraging period she took a position as waitress, but her health interfered with her keeping this position. In despair at the situation, she used a little money saved while working in restaurants to open a rooming house, in an undesirable portion of the city, and from being an industrious and brave woman, a happy housewife and faithful mother, she has become—at the age of thirty—a woman of doubtful reputation to whom the institution authorities felt that her children should not be returned.

Was institutional care a satisfactory solution for a case like the following?

Four children were being cared for by an institution free of charge. The father, a man of irreproachable character, devoted to his children, had operated a foot punch press machine at an average wage of \$15 per week. In 1906 his wife died, and he employed a housekeeper in order to keep the family together. Soon after he had established his home on this basis, while operating the machine he crushed the end of the index finger on his right hand. The company's physician took off the finger at the first joint and dressed the wound. Blood poisoning set in, and the company sent another physician to take off the second joint. This second physician stated that the instruments used by the first physician had caused the poisoning. Still another amputation was necessary to save the hand, and Mr. Hardy was laid off for over two months, because of the accident, but received no compensation except the physician's services. This interruption threw him out of the regular ranks, and when he went back to the shop he was only allowed to do spare work at night for a wage of \$8.00 per week. This amount did not pay his household expenses and so, after a brave struggle, he broke up his home and put the children in an institution.



## PITTSBURGH AS A FOSTER MOTHER

His injury had occurred on a press machine which made a certain series of punches before beginning over again. Mr. Hardy believed he lost count of the punches, and thought he had made fifty-four when he had only made fifty-three. Feeling himself to blame for the accident, he had not taken steps to secure compensation from the company. Both he and the children were waiting for the time when he could afford to have them at home again. The institution had spent \$900 in giving these children institutional life.

The need for friendly help to prevent dependency in the families to whom compensation had been made by the employer, was sharply brought out by the story of Mrs. Dean.

Mrs. Dean and her husband, people of excellent reputation, lived together in comparative comfort until the man was killed in 1904. He had formerly been a structural iron worker, earning \$18 a week. Later he entered a steel mill and worked as an electrician and machinist. He had been with the company about four months when he was asked to repair an electric crane. After he had climbed up and crept under the crane to do the work, someone, not knowing he was there, started the machinery, and Mr. Dean was so injured that he died within two hours. It was said at the plant that it could not be learned whether or not he had told anyone he was going under the crane as he was unable to speak after the injury. Through the efforts of friends, Mrs. Dean was paid \$500 in cash by the company and \$25 a month for three years by the Carnegie Relief Fund, a total of \$1,400. Mr. Dean had been insured in the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for \$1,000 and this was paid to his wife.

With the little capital thus afforded her, Mrs. Dean tried to conduct a store, but said that in this experience she had only learned how quickly it was possible to lose one's money. She was then obliged to place her eldest daughter with an aunt as domestic, her three other children in institutions; and she herself went out as housekeeper. She was much discouraged about her children and herself. There were no relatives able to relieve her of any of her burdens. She had recently taken a clerkship in a department store where she was paid \$6.00 a week, and had taken her sons out of the institution so she might make a home for them. One of them was earning a wage of \$6.00 a week as office boy. Unfortunately, she was not regularly employed, and her health had been much impaired by the strain under which she had lived. In an attempt to find a house within her means, she had to take one in an undesirable neighborhood, facing the railroad tracks, and the trains thundered past almost at her doorstep. Here she was trying to make a home to which the little girl could come.

## THE PITTSBURGH DISTRICT

Another type of case with which the children's institutions had dealt was that in which disability was not technically due to trade accident, but in which the breadwinner's breakdown was due to trade conditions, causing the children to become unnecessarily dependent. This type may be briefly illustrated by the Leit family.

Mr. Leit worked in a pottery in Pittsburgh. He and his wife were thrifty, somewhat quarrelsome Germans who, however, got along very well with their seven children. Mr. Leit's work had consisted in lifting plumbago pots, weighing about 35 pounds, from the machine in which they were made, on to a rack. In the language of the shop, he "racked pots from the jiggerhead." He also had to carry pots on wooden trays, which he balanced on his hip, and hand them down to the men working at the kiln. After nine years of this he complained of "rheumatism," gave up his work, and was sent to the poorhouse. Four of his children were put in institutions and his wife struggled along with an old cow, some chickens, and with help from the older sons. The children had already spent an aggregate of some twenty-one years in the institution when our investigation was made. Mr. Leit was then a man of forty-six years. He was on crutches, in constant pain, and profoundly depressed as the result of his nine years of idleness in the poorhouse. He had never had a thorough physical examination, and at a cost of \$2.00 and two hours, we discovered that the real source of his disability was a dislocated hip, caused by his work in the pottery. Had this matter been attended to by those to whom the application was made at the children's institution, it is highly probable that the family would not have fallen below the poverty line, and that their home would have been preserved. The failure to study this case at the start had cost the institution some \$2,300 to date, wasted the best part of the man's life, and broken the family circle. Under constant treatment, he so improved that he discarded his crutches and was soon to be helped to take charge of a small shop. The chances were that, under careful supervision, this family would be restored to independence, but after nine years of needless delay.

Here is a case of trade disease which had been treated by a relief agency first and by a children's institution afterward:

Mr. York, a strong young workman and a good father to his two sons, was a shearman earning about \$3.00 a day in a steel plant. Work became scarce and he was obliged to take a job that paid but \$1.00 a day. In a desperate effort to increase his income, he took a position as

galvanizer in a manufacturing plant at a daily wage of \$3.50. In two years he was suffering from acid poisoning, and Mrs. York tried to persuade him to give up his work and find something else. He told her, however, that the manager of the plant said that when a workman there was once poisoned with acid, there was no hope for recovery, and that he might as well go on in the plant until he died. He did die one year later after extreme suffering. It is to be noted that the pickler in the acid department was buried on the day of Mr. York's death, and the foreman died two months later, both of the same trouble. Toward the end of Mr. York's life, work had been irregular and his average earnings had amounted to only about \$10.50 a week. His insurance in the Prudential paid the burial expenses, but there was no other money for his wife to fall back upon. She kept the children with her for a few months after their father's death, and received a weekly allowance of two loaves of bread, one pound of sugar, one-quarter pound of tea, one quart of beans, and a cake of soap from a relief society. However, this was not enough to save the home and the children were put into an institution. The mother then went out by the day sewing. She could not earn more than \$6.00 a week and was unable to pay more than a few dollars toward the support of her children in the institution. It would have been no greater expense to charity to have provided adequate relief in the home, and so have preserved the family circle.

Table 16 shows the immediate causes of family disintegration and child dependency in those households which had been pulled down by what are generally regarded as preventable community ills.

The facts we secured showed that, in the dependency of 70 of the total 275 families studied, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, occupational diseases, trade accidents, and smallpox had been determining factors. This number did not represent all of the families in which such misfortunes had occurred; it included only those in which they were clearly the chief causes for child dependency. It meant that one-quarter of these families had been crippled or broken up by these undefeated enemies of the public and private good; that behind the immediate misfortunes of these dislocated children were found neglected city conditions—unsanitary houses, a polluted water supply, widespread infection of tuberculosis, occupational diseases, and trade accidents. This he who ran could read. What needless tragedies lay behind the unexplained diseases we could not know.



# THE PITTSBURGH DISTRICT

TABLE 16.—COMMUNITY CAUSES FOUND TO UNDERLIE APPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL CARE OF CHILDREN IN 275 FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS

<i>Community Causes Underlying Applications for Institutional Care of Children</i>	<i>Families Represented</i>	<i>Children in Institutions</i>
Tuberculosis. . . . .	25	56
Trade accident or occupational disease . . . . .	23	59
Typhoid and complications . . . . .	19	52
Smallpox . . . . .	3	5
Total . . . . .	70	172

The children's institutions had been for many long years grappling daily with the appeals of wage-earners who asked that institutional care might be given their boys and girls; had been listening to their reasons for wanting such care; had been meeting on visiting days the relatives and friends of those children whom the institution had received; had been constantly hearing the stories of those who wished to take the children back again. Surely these children's institutions should have afforded in their records a vantage ground for studying the forces which were creating havoc among wage-earners' families. Surely in the tables and cases cited there is evidence that these agencies could have contributed toward resourceful campaigns for the elimination of disease which was due to bad civic conditions, and for the preventing of trade accidents and trade injuries; and toward constructive schemes of workingmen's compensation, pension systems, and social insurance, which would tend to help preserve family life as the natural setting for childhood.

This service of identifying and measuring the forces which produced abnormal child dependency in the community was one which the Allegheny County institutions could, through preparation, have rendered, but did not.

V

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages we have reviewed the work of the institutions for the care of normal dependent children in Allegheny County and have discussed their obligations  
to the needy children they had received;  
to the families of these children;  
to the community from which they came and to which they were returned.

We have tried to keep the discussion on these points clear and distinct in outline. It is true that beneath our lines of cleavage certain factors interweave. From the first description of the methods used in admitting children, to the final analysis of causes of child dependency, we have brought out the importance of investigating families and recording social information. But it is hoped that the emphasis given in turn to the responsibilities of the institution to the child, to the home, and to the community, in the chapters where each is especially discussed, will prevent confusion.

In Chapter II it was shown that the children's institutions, having absolute control not only of the school time but of the leisure time and of all the elements in the environment of the child, were in a position to test and to carry forward methods of child development which progressive educators and physicians would have envied. In them one should have been able to find not only the most advanced standards in nutritional work, physical welfare, education, and industrial equipment, but also leadership in the proposal and advocacy of such movements as medical inspection of school children, vocational training, and the closer organization of charities. They could have demonstrated, through their own charges and by co-operation, what may be done in these directions. The standard here suggested would have given them dignity, lifting them from forms of haphazard charitable relief, expressed in boarding-house privileges, to the rank of laboratories for research.

In Chapter III it was shown that adequate care of the children for whom application was made called for such work with their families as would check and prevent child dependency, by keeping

the households together and by helping them if possible to rehabilitate themselves. In the fundamental operations of admission and discharge, the call was for constructive planning to encourage desirable family ties and to terminate bad ones. Moreover, in as far as these Pittsburgh institutions found their efforts for helpfulness frustrated by family desertion, improper guardianship, premature labor, the loan shark or other evils, they were in position to back movements for reform with graphic personal testimony. The faulty laws or lax enforcement thus revealed could not fail to affect the chance in life of thousands of other children besides those who came to the institution doors.

Similarly, under Chapter IV, it was shown that the institutions had a very important responsibility for keeping the public informed regarding influences in the community which were producing child dependency, as evidenced by the presence in these Pittsburgh institutions of boys and girls who had been robbed of their natural supporters by such causes as typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and trade accidents.

From the child in the institution, we have thus traced the responsibilities of the children's agencies back to the hidden springs in the Pittsburgh hills which were feeding 3,000 children a year to this living stream of child dependency.

Beginning now at the source—with the child in his natural home—we can retrace these responsibilities in the sequence of a logical program of prevention. We can trace (1) how far these agencies—and through them the community—were helping to safeguard natural homes from the disruptive forces which kept filling the children's institutions to overflowing; (2) how far they were helping to rehabilitate such homes or (3) to secure foster homes so as to keep such children, wherever possible, in normal surroundings; (4) how far as individual institutions, and collectively as the children's agencies of Pittsburgh, they had thought out and had prepared themselves to meet such special needs of the remaining children as could not be met by private homes.

In the first place, then, we found that while the crowded institutions were laboratories of first-hand information regarding the causes which were creating dependent children in the Pittsburgh District, their managers had been so overtaxed by the burden



constantly pressing upon them that they had not studied the sources of that burden. They knew and recited individual instances, but failed to perceive the somewhat subtle connection between civic inertia, oppressive living and industrial conditions, and the constantly increasing demand for charitable care. Their records did not supply them—nor they the public—with the simple facts which showed that the children in the institutions were symptoms of conditions that held the welfare of thousands of other children in jeopardy.

In failing to note and report the deeply significant disasters due to community neglect which were constantly recited to them, the institutions were like those physicians who failed to recognize and to report to the proper authorities contagious diseases among their patients. Every such instance of a normal family broken up should have led the community to stronger efforts for conservation of family life. The appeal of the children was not for institutional care; it was for reasonable protection at home. Yet who had heard of any of these children's agencies working shoulder to shoulder with a department of health, a child labor committee, a consumer's league? Who had heard of such organizations as a department of health, a child labor committee, a consumer's league seeking information from these potential storehouses of facts? It is not overstating the truth to say that there was not one social or civic movement which the problems of the children's agencies did not touch, nor one which would not have profited by a knowledge of the unchecked dangers and disasters to the home which the mere presence of these child refugees signified.

In the second place, we found that many of these home disasters might have been prevented, and that the conditions which produced them could have been remedied had the institutions sought and used the proper means. In nearly one-third of the families studied the parents showed moral stability. Nearly one-fourth were borderline families with wavering fortunes, needing moral stimulus and friendly visitation quite as much as material help. It is clear then that the possibility of rehabilitating the families who applied for charitable relief in the form of child care, was the first question to be considered by the institution to which application was first made for assistance. Instead these

institutions seemed to have become accustomed to doubt the effectiveness of efforts at rehabilitation and to regard admission of the child as the most practical course. They had frequently taken children from good homes for the sole reason that the mother was widowed or deserted and was obliged to go to work. The more "worthy" the mother, the more quickly was institutional care granted to her child. And so the child lost his most precious birthright and the mother was allowed to go her way. Sometimes, as we have seen, the amount of money spent on a child per week in institutional maintenance was as large a sum as the mother could earn in the precarious occupations which were open to her untrained or out-of-practice fingers. Yet the reasonableness of home allowances for such women, or of other alternatives, was not considered before taking such a drastic step as the separation of parent from child, and of brother from sister. It is, of course, beyond the bounds of research to say how far inherent weakness of the individuals concerned would have made rehabilitation of these homes impracticable; but from the facts gathered it is rational to assume that many of the children in the institutions need never have been pronounced "homeless."

Nor in the third place need many other children have remained "homeless," had the child-caring agencies met their kindred obligations of providing substitute homes for normal children whose own families were hopelessly broken up or truly unfit. It is equally beyond the bounds of research to say how many of the 3,000 children receiving daily care in the Allegheny County institutions here discussed need never have been admitted to institutional life had there been adequate machinery for prompt and efficient placing-out work. In this stronghold of pioneer asylums, institutional care was the first help offered, and once a child was admitted further consideration of his future was suspended for a long period of time—sometimes for years. Sometimes it was not considered at all and the child was held until he reached the age at which, under the rules, he had to be automatically discharged.

To be sure, the institutions would have told you that they did placing out themselves. This was done, however, chiefly to create vacancies for new applicants or in order to relieve the

institution from the oversight of children who had become "troublesome." Placing-out work had not been generally developed for the benefit of the child himself, nor were the institutions equipped for it. This was shown by the material gathered regarding children who had been discharged by the institutional authorities. We found that many of the children were safe and well. Others, who had received institutional care for years, had, in the absence of machinery for the investigation of homes, been returned to unfit parents; and still others, put with strange foster parents, had been lost track of after a few letters were exchanged. We came across instances of discharged children who had gone to work before reaching the legal age; and other instances of mentally deficient children who, because of their pitiful infirmities, had been exploited.

This brings us back to the first responsibility of the institutions—the children within their walls, many of whom needed the special care which only institutional shelter could give. And here we found the sad paradox that within not a few of the institutions organized for the protection of childhood were dangers quite comparable in social destructiveness to those which in the world outside rendered the children dependent upon charity. These dangers were perhaps less dramatic, but equally hostile to child welfare—such as overcrowded dormitories; lack of adequate physical and medical examination; cheap, unnourishing food; meager records of important social matters; low standards in the institution schools; overwork at institution drudgery; a serious misconception as to the fundamental principles of industrial training; insufficient equipment for developing play; and in many instances underpaid, underqualified employees. Granting, without question, the high ideals and earnest desire of all the boards of management to meet the true needs of the children, and the fact that few of the institutions were defective on all of these counts, while in certain points some of them exceeded the best practical community standards, the majority of them fell far below reasonable expectation.

These institutions for normal children would have liked to do many things which they were not doing, if they had had more money. They did not feel justified in a larger per capita expense



when an increasing number of needy children pressed continually against their doors. No one who has not come into close contact with their daily work could realize how full of difficulties it was. The weight of responsibility which rested upon the chief executives was heavy beyond the conception of the average board member. The Allegheny County institutions had allowed themselves to become, with few exceptions, engaged in such a taxing, hand-to-mouth struggle for the wherewithal to house, feed, and clothe a heterogeneous mass of children, that it was a practical impossibility for them to maintain such standards of plant, equipment, nutritional work, educational and social opportunities, as were absolutely necessary for intensive work. "We would like to give Evelyn a high school and college training because she is so bright," one manager said of an institution ward. "But we can't afford to give such opportunities to the others and so she must go without. We cannot be partial." So it was everywhere, unless the institution was very small and highly individualized—as few of the Allegheny County institutions were.

The institutions sacrificed high standards of work in order to take in as many children as possible; and as the tide of dependency rose the standard of individual care fell. New institutions were opened and the tide continued to rise. One asylum enlarged its capacity to 1,500 beds for normal, dependent children, but it still turned away children for lack of room. As one of the workers remarked, "If we had 5,000 beds 6,000 children would apply. If we had 6,000 beds, 7,000 would apply."

Was it not clear that the institutions were making catch-alls of themselves, and that a mere increase of capacity without increase in discrimination among applicants, aggravated and did not meet their real requirements?

What was imperatively needed was, first of all, a getting together of the child-caring workers to face the problem as a whole; then a specialization of effort along co-operative lines, a weeding-out of applicants, a redistribution of children received, the maintenance of such standards as specialization would make possible; and all along the line, efficiency tests.

Clearly the overburdened institutions needed to develop an efficient, centralized placing-out bureau for the sake of those

normal children who, temporarily or permanently deprived of proper homes of their own, would respond to the advantages of genuine family life. At the time of our study there was not only an absence of team work between the institutions and the relieving organizations in the rehabilitation of the good homes that might have been saved, but between the children's institutions and the placing-out agencies in cases where families could not be rehabilitated. There was also an almost total lack of co-operation among the children's institutions themselves. A marked tendency among them was to pull still farther apart and away from one another. As a result, we found brothers in one institution and their sisters in another, without any agreement on the part of the agencies caring for them as to a future plan. The managers and workers in different institutions rarely knew each other, did not look to one another for help and advice in the meeting of common problems, and remained ignorant of many points of individual excellence which it would have been mutually advantageous to them to share.

We found but one children's agency which illustrated the possibility of helpfulness through co-operation, and that was the Allegheny County juvenile court. Although it was seriously hampered\* by the inadequacy of its funds, by rotation of judges, by an unfit place of detention, and by occasional political interference, yet the juvenile court succeeded in establishing new ideals for children's work; especially did it demonstrate the remarkable results which oftentimes follow skilful, constructive work in the child's home, by drawing together a number of specialized agencies.

Such co-ordination means a division of labor. Take, for example, the natural specialization seen in the agencies in Pennsylvania for children who had marked physical needs. There were up-to-date, efficient state schools for the blind and also for the deaf; there was an excellent state institution for the feeble-minded; a progressive, well-run private institution for epileptics; a new, well administered private institution for the industrial training of crippled children; a children's hospital with a highly skilled staff under private management; and some unusually effective fresh-air homes for summer work with anemic and under-toned children. When a blind child was found everyone immedi-

\* See footnote on page 38.

ately thought of the school for the blind. No one thought of asking the school for the deaf to train a child who was merely crippled, or vice versa. Each of these agencies had decided at the start what type of child it would help and it had then studied the needs of such children and shaped its equipment to meet them. The work of these agencies did not overlap; it was complementary.

Compare this co-ordination of work for children who had conspicuous physical handicaps with the confusion in the provision for the supposedly normal children, the children whose needs were social. No boy or girl sound in eye and ear, in any of the institutions for normal children, had as carefully planned educational opportunities as did those in the school for the blind or the school for the deaf; no child in the institutions for normal children, even though he possessed special abilities, had as pedagogically sound and developmental a training as the futureless children in the state institution for the feeble-minded; neither did the strong, straight limbed children in the orphanages have the same discriminating training and vocational guidance as were supplied to the weakest of little cripples in the institution devoted solely to them.

Many of the children in the orphanages were physically below the normal, many had tuberculous tendencies, and it is doubtful whether many of them were in what one would call a positive condition of health; yet the institutions said that scientific nutritional work was beyond their means except for a limited number of children who were in the institution infirmaries. There was a large group of borderline cases whose need was not pronounced enough to warrant their admission to the institutions for special children, yet they were not welcome in the orphanages and asylums; nor had any of these conceived the idea of assuming the treatment of such children as their own particular work.

The year following our study a division of labor did begin among the social agencies of the Pittsburgh District. An associated charities was organized for the purpose of centralizing the various social movements and standardizing methods of work; and a children's bureau was opened—one definite result of the Western Pennsylvania Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, held



in April, 1908. The object of this bureau was to serve as a clearing house for the children's agencies of the whole county, to relieve them from having to deal with miscellaneous applicants, as well as to undertake other constructive work needed to insure the welfare of the children of the city.\* Of almost equal importance was the inauguration of a special clinic for the free examination and treatment of backward and defective children. Another development was the founding of a county parental school on a country site, for the training of unruly boys of a type not needing the care of the reform school and yet difficult to handle in ordinary institutions. A junior republic was started also. A strong committee set to work to study and revise the laws and legal machinery which had to do with desertion and non-support.† It will be recalled that improvements of various kinds have been cited elsewhere in this report. There were doubtless other plans and improvements on foot which did not come to the attention of the writer although constant effort was made to learn of them.

As fundamental as the lack of co-operation was the lack of the tonic effect and incentive which comes from public scrutiny and supervision. We have seen that the tax payers of Allegheny County had large financial as well as health interests involved in the standards of these institutions. Yet even where, as was often the case, the methods of business administration were approved by the most critical of auditors; where every penny had

\*This bureau in the summer of 1913 expanded into the Child Welfare Association, backed by the Juvenile Court Association and the Associated Charities, which was organized

"To receive children from the Juvenile Court and from public and private institutions and from other sources in Allegheny County, for placement in suitable homes.

"To maintain over-sight of children so placed by adequate visitation.

"To protect dependent, neglected and delinquent children.

"To serve as a bureau of information, advice and reference for agencies and individuals interested in helping children.

"To co-operate in securing and enforcing legislation designed to promote child welfare."

At the end of its first year the Child Welfare Association gives promise of affording a permanent basis for co-operation among the children's agencies.

†The 1913 legislature passed a law, drafted and advocated by this committee, enabling the courts to commit men to the workhouse for desertion or non-support and to order that the county pay 65 cents a day to the man's dependents. This law also applies to those men who fail to support their illegitimate children.

The 1913 legislature also passed a "widows' pension" act carrying an appropriation of \$200,000 for two years.

been used to its highest purchasing power of food, clothing, and shelter; where there was material thrift, and even prosperity, we found that the business for which the institutions existed, the larger social rights of inarticulate childhood had been quite casually overlooked. Men and women accustomed to apply business principles to all their other investments constantly contributed vast sums for extensions of institution work without asking managers to account for their stewardship in human conservation and output. There was not even an accepted minimum standard which they applied with respect to such fundamental matters as diet and health, to say nothing of what constituted good elementary education and suitable recreation.

This lack of standardization was largely due to the failure of the state board of public charities to perceive the social value of its powers and to exercise them. The duties of the board were distinctly advisory\* and its reports were supposed to be the main source of information for the guidance of the legislators in arranging appropriations. As the attorney general of the state is the financial auditor for all the institutions receiving public funds, so the board of public charities should be the social auditor of the same institutions and also of those which are not subsidized but come within its scope. The state exacted an accounting for the expenditure of each cent of the appropriation it made from the tax payers' money to the institution, but the dependent child, admittedly a ward of the state, could be spent without its making any inquiry concerning him. There certainly should have been as much care used in accounting for the admission of a child as in receipting for a contribution of money; the discharge of a child should have been as conscientiously accounted for as the spending of a dollar.

There was no social balance sheet showing the progress of the child in the institution. The state did not know, the public did not know, the institutions did not know. Yet the facts were easily ascertainable, and it was for the institutions to provide them.

\*In 1913 the legislature gave the board larger powers of enforcement. A public charities association meanwhile has been organized and has had investigators at work in both the eastern and western ends of the state with the idea of promoting before the legislature of 1915 the elimination of the insane and feeble-minded from the county almshouses, the reform of the subsidy system, and the improvement of the general scheme of state supervision of charitable institutions.

They had committees on admission and discharge, on food, clothes, school, religious instruction, entertainment, and so on, but none on co-operation, none on information and records, none on remedial and constructive work, not one on the prevention of child dependency. Absorbed by the difficulties of attending to his immediate needs, the institutions had lost sight of the essential social interests of the child himself. They had neglected opportunities for preventive and constructive work with families, only to find themselves overwhelmed by the consequences of this neglect, in what they had conceived as their sole responsibility—the running of institutions.

The unending circle which our study thus made clear called for a program for the community as a whole—in which the institutions themselves might well be the leaders—based on a new appraisal of the social needs of childhood in our industrial centers, and directed toward such ends as those we have recapitulated in this chapter: The conservation of the homes of children, in order that they may not be unnecessarily wrecked; the rehabilitation of breaking homes that should be conserved; the substitution of thoughtfully selected foster homes for homes which are completely destroyed or unfit; the co-ordination and specialization of the institutions for the children who remained; the adoption of such standards of care as would yield for them the best results in terms of happy, wholesome children; and the enforcement of these standards by an informed, convinced public opinion.





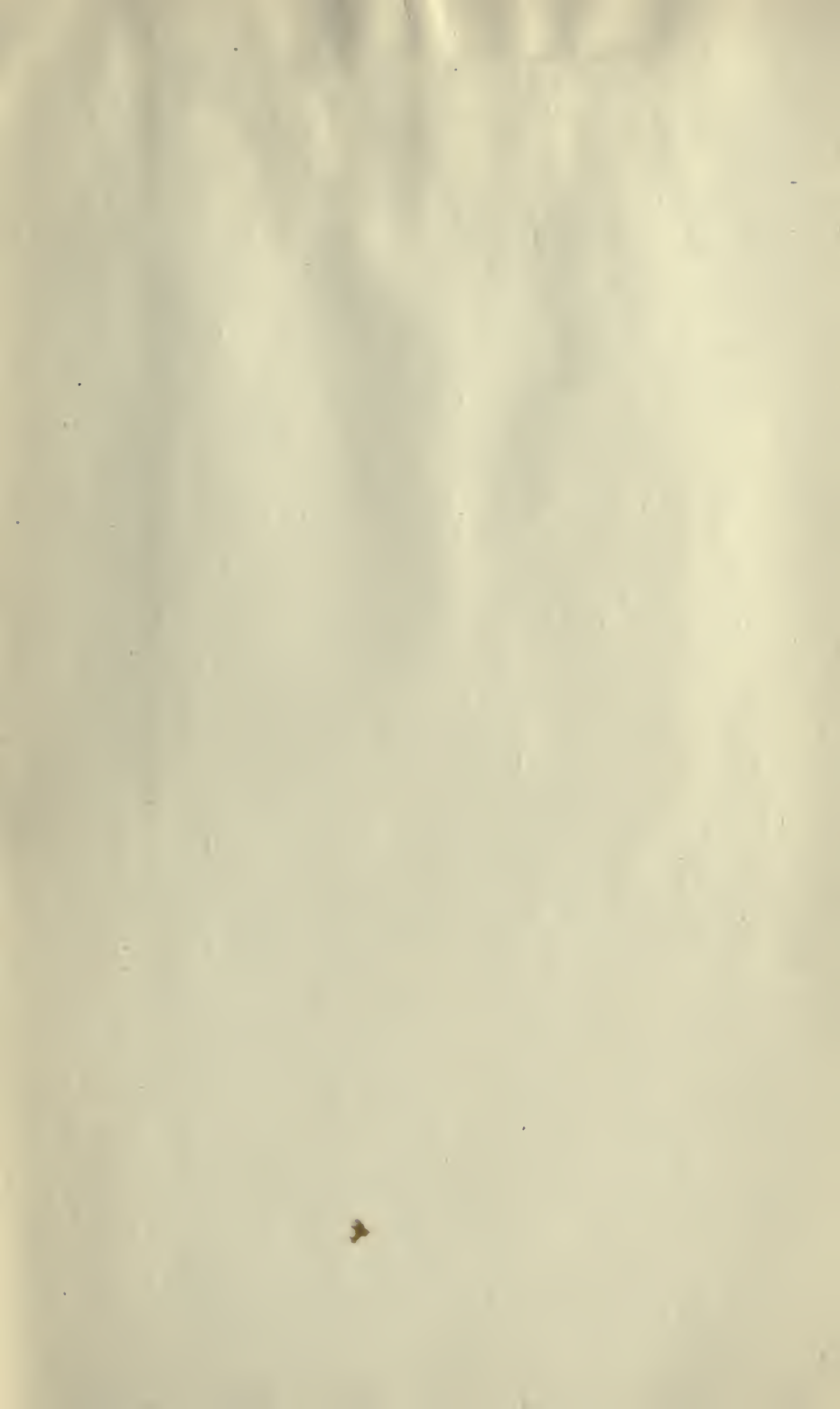














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